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SDC Culture Sector Evaluation for the Horn of Africa

Full Report

March 2021

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Confederaziun svizra

**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**

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## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ArtCH | Arts and Creativity House for Somalia |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |
| CTO | Culture and Tourism Office (local branch of the Ethiopian MoCT) |
| ESR | Ethiopia Somali Region |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation |
| HACPAD | Humanitarian Agency for Community Progress and Development |
| INGO | International Non-Government Organisation |
| JPLG | Joint Program on Local Governance |
| LAs | Local Authorities |
| LNGO | Local Non-Government Organisation |
| MoCT | Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Ethiopia) |
| MoICNG | Ministry of Information, Culture and National Guidance (Somaliland) |
| MoICT | Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (Federal Somalia) |
| MoITHCT | Ministry of Information, Telecommunication, Heritage, Culture and Tourism (Puntland) |
| MoSCH | Ministry of Sports, Culture and Heritage (Kenya) |
| MoTIT | Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism (Somaliland) |
| OPOV | One-Person One-Vote |
| P/CVE | Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism |
| PDRC | Puntland Development Research Council |
| PYAN | Puntland Youth Association Network |
| RPHoA | Regional Programme Horn of Africa |
| SDC | The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation |
| SDC | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation |
| SOCSA | Somaliland Culture and Sport Association |
| SOMASA | Somali Academy for Sciences and Arts |
| UNESCO | United Nations Education, Scientific and Culture Organisation |

In the text below, 'Somalia' refers to the area controlled by the Federal Government plus Somaliland; when referring only to Federal Somalia (including Puntland), 'Federal Somalia' is the term used.

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1. Summary Findings

There is a rich and vibrant cultural sector across the Horn of Africa. Set against a backdrop of political, social and economic unrest, contemporary and traditional culture provides an important avenue for self-expression, learning, leisure and entertainment. It also provides opportunities for addressing broader socio-economic challenges such as youth unemployment and gender inequality.

At a regional level, **_the review team identifies four overarching needs within the culture sector:_**

| Finding | Need |
|---|---|
| Interest in cultural programming among government and donors is low. There is poor regional coordination of cultural programming between governments, donors and multilaterals. | Improved coordination between government, donors and multilaterals. Stronger advocacy for cultural programming. |
| The culture sector is highly fragmented, with poor physical and institutional infrastructure to link cultural actors | Greater physical and institutional infrastructure to bring cultural actors, artists and organisations together |
| Tangible and intangible cultural heritage is at risk from neglect and lack of interest, both at a political level and among citizens | Research, documentation, conservation and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage |
| Culture is an important avenue for youth self-expression in a context of limited opportunities to participate in political discourse. | Greater access to funding for artists and creatives. Outlets / avenues/ platforms for youth self-expression |

## 1.2. Recommendations

*Based on these needs, we recommend building a strategic engagement plan around four core programme pillars:*

| Pillar | Objectives | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| Pillar 1: Policy and Advocacy | To mainstream culture within the broader development policy landscape. | • Engage in bilateral discussions with other donors;<br>• Ensure that regional messaging and communications content continually reiterates linkages between culture and wider socio-economic development outcomes;<br>• Engage with national government counterparts in a continual effort to ensure culture is considered a priority for development. |
| Pillar 2: Building linkages between culture-sector actors | To foster a more collaborative creative environment across the region. | • Building linkages between culture sector actors should be a long-term goal. SDC's activities should simply <u>encourage</u> collaboration and coordination between organisations wherever possible; |
| Pillar 3: Preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage | To protect cultural heritage from neglect, damage and loss;<br><br>To create learning/ teaching resources. | • SDC should fund mapping of tangible and intangible heritage, including music, dances, poetry, crafts, stories and local lore, and language (dialects)<br>• SDC can encourage local scholarship in cultural issues by funding research grants or fostering exchange with universities in Addis Ababa, Nairobi and the region. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | • SDC could also support local authorities to document cultural heritage, conservation and development efforts; |
| | | • SDC should support outreach and educational activities to build awareness of Somalia's rich built cultural heritage; |
| | | • The activities above could contribute to a regional digital archive, providing an important learning and teaching resource for scholars, students, practitioners and policy makers. |
| Pillar 4: Promotion of contemporary and traditional culture | To support creativity and artistic expression. | • SDC should allocate grants for small-scale grass-roots cultural initiatives administered by an implementing partner or external fiduciary actor; |
| | | • SDC should facilitate a roving '…Got Talent' show in North-Eastern Kenya Talent; |
| | | • SDC should support cultural awareness raising efforts for political transition |
| | | • SDC should support Ethiopian Somali Youth Entertainment and Mobilisation. |

Virtually all types of cultural programming envisioned in our recommendations contribute to *social cohesion* and *inclusion* and to *cultural exchange* between Somalis and surrounding populations, including Ethiopian highlanders and Kenyans.

*Gender* and *inclusive economic growth* should be considered as cross-cutting thematic priorities. Where possible and relevant, activities that fall under each of the pillars above should aim to strengthen economic inclusion and the status of women in society. The majority of projects recommended in this report have a strong focus on gender. Inclusive economic growth we view as a longer-term outcome. In the short term we therefore recommend that SDC conducts further research to understand the market dynamics in the culture creative industries.

Finally, we find opportunities to link cultural programming to two of SDC's wider strategic regional priorities: *Health* and *migration/protection.*

## 2.  INTRODUCTION

### 2.1. About this Document

Aleph Strategies was commissioned by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to conduct a culture sector evaluation in the Horn of Africa between September 2020 and March 2021. This report presents the results of this work. It contains the combined findings from a detailed literature review and key informant interviews with culture sector stakeholders in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya.

The report broadly falls into two parts. The first part provides a summary of our key observations about the culture sector in the region, based on an extensive mapping of culture sector organisations. Given the large volume of information this entails, this section of the report is hyperlinked to a detailed description of cultural actors and *specific entry points* in the annexes at the end of the report, to provide quick access to further information should readers require. The aim is to present SDC with a menu of potential entry points that it can consider in isolation of our recommendations. This first section of the report concludes with a summary list of *overarching needs* across the sector.

In the second part, we present our *recommendations* for SDC to consider as part of a 12-year regional culture engagement planning process, bringing together the needs of the culture sector with the entry points identified in the previous section. This section contains both general suggestions for the *directions* we think SDC could pursue, as well as project *ideas* that could be undertaken. Following guidance from SDC, it does not provide a blueprint for developing the strategy itself. The aim is to present a range of contextualised ideas which SDC can elect to explore further as it initiates the strategy design process.

### 2.2. Purpose and Scope

Aleph Strategies was engaged to deliver on the following objectives:

- Identify culture institutions and potential partners in the RPHoA region;
- Identify on-going donor initiatives and potential synergies in the culture sector;
- Identify new potential initiatives not supported by others geared towards culture;
- Identify new potential culture initiatives that promote social cohesion, inclusion and reconciliation;
- Get an increased understanding of common regional issues to address through culture initiatives, linked to at least one of the RPHoA domain, i.e. 1) food security, 2) health, 3) Governance and 4) Migration / Protection; or its transversal themes, i.e. a) gender or b) conflict sensitivity;

-       Identify concrete entry points of engagement for the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage and artistic expression such as, but not limited to music, poetry or a combination.

## 2.3. Background

SDC is unique amongst international development agencies – and certainly amongst those active in the RPHoA – for its focus on the role of culture in development. SDC commits 1% of its budget to art and culture in its partner countries,[1] providing country office with long-term visibility on cultural funding. SDC has delivered a range of cultural projects throughout the RPHoA, but is now looking to develop a 12-year strategic engagement plan to deliver a coherent suite of programmes and projects that pull in the same direction. This is a timely endeavour, as SDC's wider Regional Cooperation Strategy is also due to be renewed in 2021, presenting opportunities to integrate and align cultural priorities with SDC's wider programme goals.

Aleph's literature review, which accompanies this report, provides a good summary of SDC's global cultural objectives and priorities. In summary, they are:

i)      Strengthening the role of civil society;
ii)     Protecting freedom of expression
iii)    Encouraging inclusion and social cohesion;
iv)     Preventing violence and conflict;
v)      Promoting discovery and access to new ideas;
vi)     Instilling dignity, meaning and a sense of beauty, inspiring hope and confidence.

As noted in our literature review, to date SDC's cultural projects in the RPHoA share three common characteristics: they are *small scale*, *self-contained* and *largely urban based*. This is to be expected in the current operational and security context where access to rural areas is limited. SDC has typically supported events, exhibitions and festivals, such as the Addis Foto Fest in Ethiopia and the Hargeysa Book Fair in Somaliland, 'Art for Inclusion' in Somalia, and 'Who I am, who we are' in Kenya. It is difficult to judge the impact of these projects in the absence of independent evaluation data, yet we can deduce some inherent advantages to these types of project. Firstly, they are high profile, taking place in areas of high population density, and achieving (some) media coverage. The Hargeysa Book Fair and Addis Foto Fest are great examples, garnering attention from the international media[2], and raising awareness

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[1] SDC (2016) P.26
[2]  https://africanarguments.org/2012/07/20/somaliland-mary-harper-finds-creativity-and-entrepreneurship-at-the-hargeisa-international-book-fair/ ; https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-49394351

of the importance of culture both domestically and abroad. Secondly, events like these[3] are extremely cost effective when viewed alongside their potential cultural, and indeed political, impact. Thirdly, they allow Somali culture to be projected on a broader stage, national or international, alongside other local cultures. Finally, they provide opportunities for pooled funding with other donors, serving as a powerful advocacy opportunity to promote the role of culture amongst multiple agencies. A key lesson we take from this, is: *small amounts of funding invested in strategic entry points can deliver exponential value.* We return to these approaches again in the 'Recommendations' section at the end of the report.

## 2.4. Methodology

Aleph Strategies undertook this research in three phases, summarised in the figure below. This was an exclusively qualitative exercise, relying on insights, ideas and information gathered through extensive key informant interviews and desk-based research.

*Figure 1: Summary of Methodology*
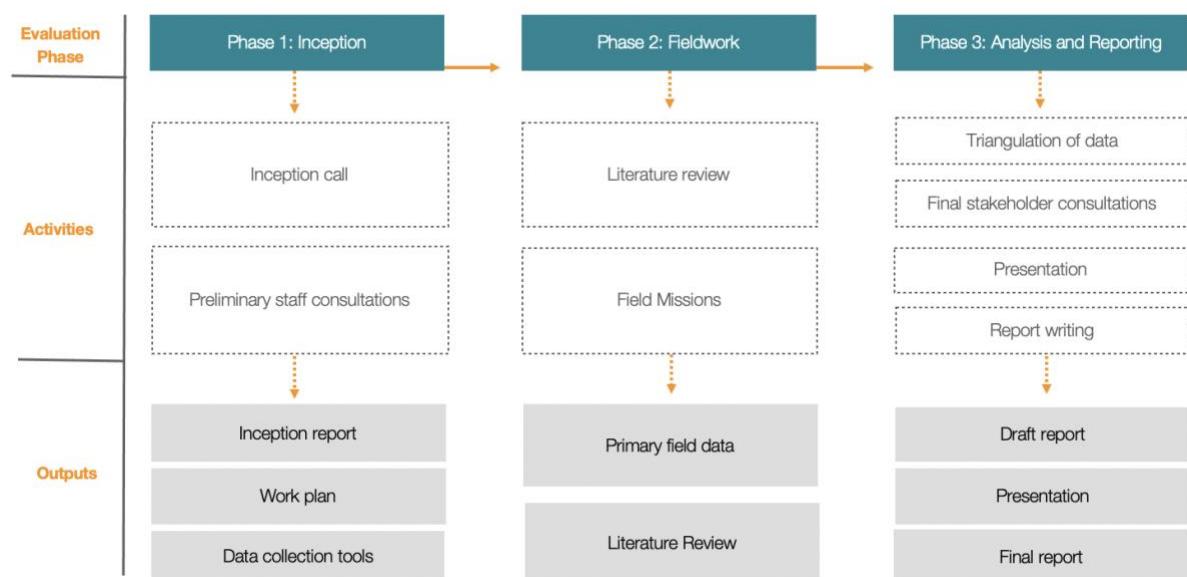


The **Inception Phase** entailed a preliminary review of SDC's programme literature and a kick off meeting with core SDC programme staff, culminating in the delivery of an inception report, work plan and interview discussion guides.

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[3] The Hargeysa Culture Centre only requested $10,256 from SDC for the Hargeysa Book Fair: Hargeysa Cultural Center (2019): *Proposal for the Hargeysa International Book Fair and Hargeysa Cultural Center.*

The **Fieldwork Phase** entailed field missions to Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. Figure 2 shows specific locations in each country where the fieldwork was conducted. The field missions were carried out from 28th September to 25th October under challenging conditions due to Covid 19 (time sensitive vaccination requirements travelling between countries, restricted access to Ethiopia etc.). An additional field visit to Ethiopia took place between 22nd February and 8th March 2021 to provide further in-depth insight into the local culture sector.

*Figure 2: Fieldwork Locations within the RPHoA*
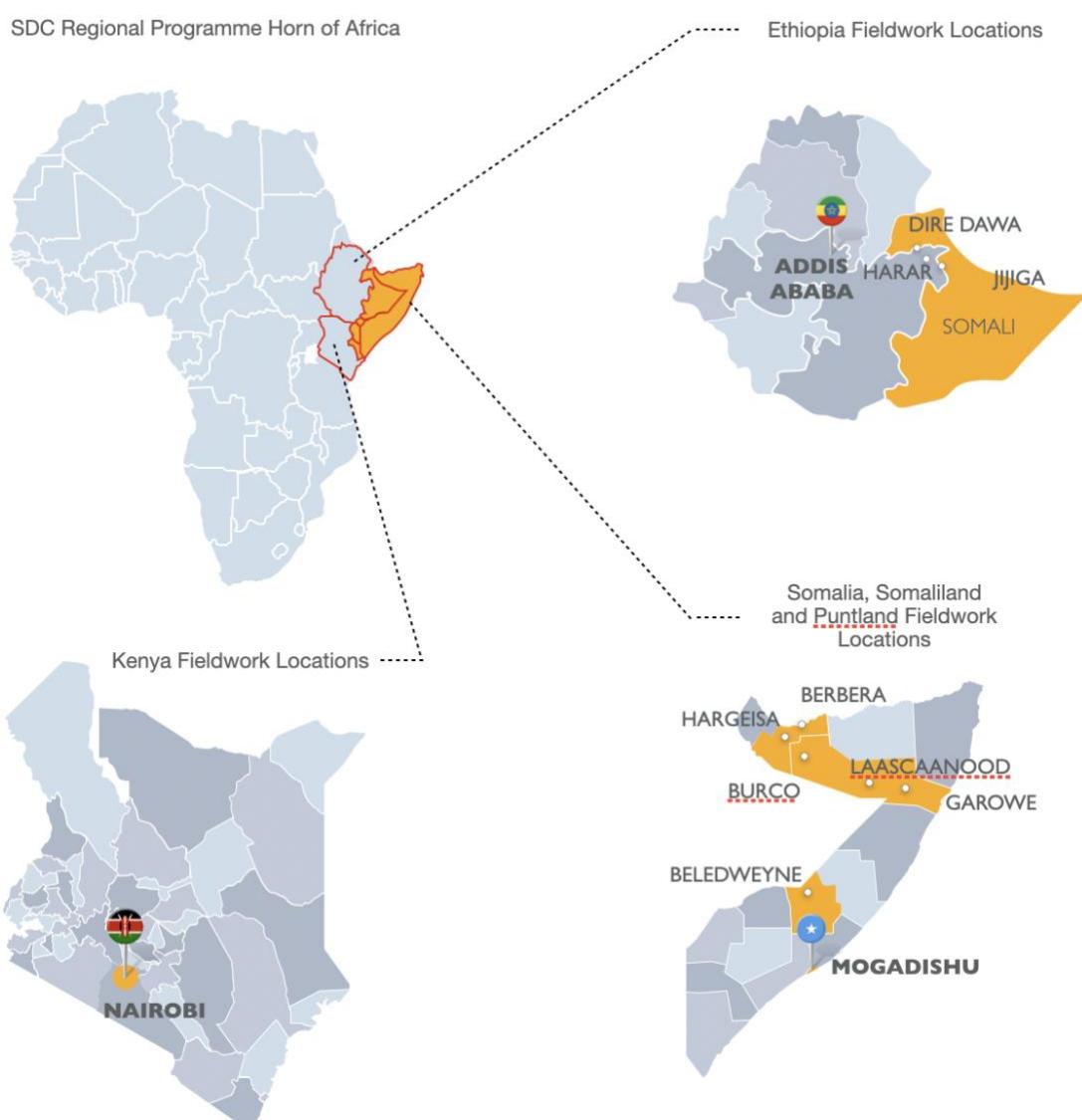


Aleph Strategies conducted a range of meetings and interviews in each location. Starting with known contacts identified through our own professional networks and contacts provided by the SDC office in Nairobi, the field team 'snowballed' contacts, following up on recommendations and leads from each

subsequent interview. In this way, a total sample of 115 individuals were engaged in the exercise. This approach had the combined advantage of ensuring that Aleph engaged with organisations both within and without SDC's extant networks, and ensuring that Aleph consulted with the most active and prominent organisations in the sector. Within the constrained fieldwork timeframe it was not possible to speak to equal distributions of stakeholders and stakeholder types in each location, but the fieldwork team secured a good mix of participants across the cultural landscape in the region.

Meetings and interviews were conducted face to face for the most part, although a small number were also conducted via video-teleconference or telephone where physical meetings were not possible. In total Aleph engaged with 115 culture sector actors across a range of organisations. A breakdown of the sample is provided in the table below, showing the distribution of interviewees by organisation type and location.

*Table 1: Sample Sizes by Location and Type*

| Interviews by Stakeholder Type | |
|---|---|
| SDC | 7 |
| Government | 17 |
| Donor | 3 |
| INGO | 18 |
| LNGO | 30 |
| Local Actors | 30 |
| Media | 4 |
| Other | 6 |
| TOTAL | 115 |

| Interviews by Location | |
|---|---|
| Nairobi | 17 |
| Mogadishu | 20 |
| Beledweyne | 4 |
| Garowe | 17 |
| Somaliland | 26 |
| Jigjiga | 12 |
| Addis Ababa | 10 |
| Dire Dawa | 6 |
| Harar | 3 |
| TOTAL | 115 |

In parallel to the field missions, Aleph also conducted a ***literature review*** of SDC's regional programme documents in Kenya, Somalia (incl. Somaliland), and Ethiopia. The review also included national policy frameworks in each of the fieldwork locations to understand the political and legislative contexts in which SDC's cultural programme will operate. A literature review report contains a summary of Aleph's observations, and is attached as an Annex to this report for reference.

In the ***analysis and reporting phase*** Aleph provided a summary presentation of core findings from the fieldwork to the SDC teams in Kenya and Ethiopia. Feedback provided by SDC was incorporated into

our analysis to align with SDC's expectations of the final report. This report is the culmination of the analysis and reporting phase.

*Focus Box 1: A Note on Entry Points*

One of the primary objectives of this exercise is to identify concrete 'entry points' for SDC to pursue. We take 'entry points' to mean specific opportunities that SDC can follow up, or specific needs and gaps in the culture sector. This might take the form of an organisation that needs funding; it may be an organisation that requires capacity building support; in other cases it may be a suggestion of our own. A full description of entry points can be found in Annex 2. Throughout this section, *entry points are highlighted in light blue boxes like this for ease of reference.*

In the recommendations section at the end of the report, we provide some suggestions and ideas for the types of programme/project that SDC could consider undertaking, based on the entry points and needs identified throughout the study.

## 2.5. Limitations

There are a number of inherent limitations with a study of this nature. The most obvious is the simple scale of the undertaking. 'Culture' is a vast, diverse, complex and mercurial entity. We therefore present our findings with the following caveats:

- *This exercise was conducted within limited time parameters.* The primary focus of this exercise is to find strategic entry points for SDC to develop a multi-year, multi-country strategic engagement plan. Aleph did not therefore undertake to engage with a representative sample of culture sector stakeholders across the spectrum of organisations and individuals working in these fields. Similarly, we have not attempted to create a comprehensive map of all cultural institutions, activities, programmes, and stakeholders as this would require a considerably larger scope of work.
- *This is not a culture mapping exercise.* We are concerned with mapping the culture sector, rather than culture per se. While we are interested in the types and range of cultural activities present in the RPHoA, this is not the primary objective of the research, and there already exist a number of resources of this nature.[4] The report does not therefore contain a list of all cultural activities in the RPHoA.

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[4] For reference, see UNESCO (2013); UNESCO (2010); Abdullahi (2001); Lewis (2008); Mire (2015).

# 3. OVERVIEW OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR IN THE PROGRAMME AREA

This section provides a contextual overview of the culture sector in the RPHoA based on an extensive mapping exercise of cultural actors to identify specific *entry points* for programming. Drawing these findings together, the section concludes with a summary of overarching *needs,* which lay the foundations for our recommendations.

## 3.1. General Observations

It is difficult to make generalisations about the 'culture sector' in the RPHoA. Each country faces its own unique set of circumstances and needs. Nevertheless, to varying degrees within each country, a number of broad observations can be made.

*In general Somali culture is vibrant and has an 'up and coming' feel to it that, despite conservative religious opposition, feels unstoppable.* At a time of continual social and political unrest across the region, supporting cultural activities can play an important role in strengthening social cohesion, fuelling economic growth, and, perhaps most importantly of all, giving people a sense of pleasure, enjoyment and intellectual stimulation. Like anywhere in the world, cultural self-expression is an integral part of how Somalis see themselves and for how the rest of the world sees Somalis. As one informant put it, external recognition of Somali culture will help to promote a more confident image of a region that has been beset by conflict and violence for decades.

However, *the cultural sector is highly fragmented, with many local groups acting independently*, and in isolation, often without knowledge of each other. This is largely a function of weak institutional and physical infrastructure to support artists and creatives. Government action to support the culture sector in the RPHoA is weak. And, while social media certainly plays a role in promoting and connecting cultural actors, there is not the same sense of a cultural community or 'sector' as might be found in other countries where there exists a comparatively greater range of physical locations for cultural actors to congregate (galleries, schools, museums, public meeting spaces, etc.), and a greater number of institutions to support cultural actors (funding bodies, artists collectives, arts councils etc.).

*Funding access to the culture sector, particularly in Somalia is often restricted by 'gatekeepers'.* Many of the stakeholders interviewed for this research highlighted the danger of Somali government officials who position themselves in such a manner as to control external access to a field. This is particularly a problem when dealing with governments. It can also be the case with 'donor darling' non-governmental organisations who tend to attract the majority of funds from external actors (though there are some advantages to working with these latter groups as illustrated later in the report).

***There is great suspicion towards government in the culture sector.*** In Somalia and Somaliland interviewees expressed concern about government involvement in the cultural sector, as there is a legacy of using art for propaganda purposes. Key informants from all Somali regions reported that criticism of the authorities will cause cultural performers and journalists to be harassed, regardless of existing legal safeguards. In this sense there is limited freedom of expression. Suspicion towards the government is deepened by a perception that commercial operating licenses are often granted on the basis of personal connection or political gain, leading to monopolies of local organisations such as printers and communication agencies. This creates a highly restrictive cultural economy. In Kenya and Ethiopia, the government is viewed differently. While suspicions of corruption persist, interviewees report that the governments here are useful development partners, though this varies significantly from one local authority to the next.

***Cultural programming in Somalia has historically been employed as a 'stabilisation' tool.*** Since the early 2010s the international community has been using access to culture as a 'stabilisation' benefit: for populations previously (or still partially) under Al Shabaab control, access to culture (and the supposed freedoms of expression this entails) is brandished as an attractive benefit of coming under federal government rule. There *is* a risk, therefore, that artists could be seen as instruments of government messaging, or worse, that they are seen as proponents of western cultural values, especially if their work has an overtly P/CVE dimension.  Artists, fortunately, seem capable of dealing with these contradictory pressures and are rarely targeted by local conservative groups or Al Shabaab. Indeed, during the fieldwork, culture sector stakeholders did not report any negative ramifications due to conflict sensitivity. Conservative attitudes were certainly dominant but Somali artists seem adept at navigating this complex environment. However, Al Shabaab is a real threat, and in a place like Beled Weyne, surrounded and penetrated by the militant group, no public cultural activity seems possible. The same is undoubtedly true of other cities surrounded by Al Shabaab.

***There is a perception among many cultural actors, particularly the older generations, that traditional Somali heritage is gradually being lost.*** Several elderly (and some young) informants observed that there is no cultural memory among the youth. The older generation complains that young people are turning their backs on their rich Somali heritage, as they cast their eyes towards online influencers and contemporary cultural trends. This is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon, and one that we have observed in numerous development contexts around the world.[5] What can be said with certainty is that

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[5] Rider, J., Skillings, D., and De Taisne, F. (2020) THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN POST-EMERGENCY RECONSTRUCTION: CASE STUDIES FROM AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND INDONESIA, Asian Affairs, 51:3, 621-

there is a lack of art education across the RPHoA at primary, secondary or tertiary levels (with the possible exception of some private schools).

*There is very little research conducted or published on traditional Somali cultural heritage.* While there is great interest in cultural research among those we interviewed, there are few opportunities to pursue research interests due to limited funding and insecurity. Most research is performed and published privately by elderly Somali scholars. Foreign researchers generally cannot access fieldwork locations. Somali universities hardly engage in academic research, and offer few culture-related subjects, because few students are willing to pay for courses that have no immediate economic or commercial value, as university informants in Mogadishu and Puntland explained. In the Ethiopian Somali Region the situation is markedly better, with Jigjiga University actively pursuing a socio-cultural research agenda. The most popular research topic, we found, is Somali language and linguistics, followed by research into cultural practices, with a focus on preserving the diversity of cultural expressions that seems to be quickly disappearing. Underlying both subjects is an enquiry into the roots of Somali identity which also preoccupies some young Somalis.

*Paradoxically, traditional Somali culture itself instils disregard for the physical elements of traditional Somali cultural heritage.* Artists that use their hands to create (e.g. painters and sculptors) are generally held in the same low regard as craftspeople – a legacy of the region's nomadic culture. The practice of creating objects is historically (and controversially) related to the Gabooye – minorities with a lower caste-like status – especially in Puntland and Somaliland.[6] Likewise, there is little market demand for traditional handcrafts or physical art forms in Somalia or internationally. Informants noted that Somalis generally prefer to buy new Chinese items than restore their grandparents' antiques. The above is true especially for the predominantly pastoralist North (from Galmudug northwards) and among the youth. In Mogadishu and the South, by contrast, the 'old' and visual artists are held in comparatively higher esteem, and the elderly recall how the Barre regime gave artists a privileged status.

*Women are highly active in the culture sector across the region*. Gender does not seem to be a major barrier to participation in cultural life per se, but it remains a barrier to participation in public life in general, especially in the current conservative climate. Cultural programming is therefore a good entry point for supporting women both in terms of social and economic inclusion.

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641, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2020.1794557. found here:
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03068374.2020.1794557

[6] Several informants believe that artists had a higher status in pre-Islamic societies. They pointed out that Islamization went hand in hand with the conquest by Northern clans of the rest of Somalia and led to artists and craftsmen being relegated to minority status – e.g. intermarriage with non-minority clans is not allowed.

## 3.2. A Regional Perspective

The Somali regions of the Horn of Africa lowlands are clearly united by language and many cultural elements, such as poetry, (pride in) pastoral origins, cross-border migration and wide dissemination of the most important clans; for example the Darood, Hawiye and Dir/Isaaq clan families are each present in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. But the past decades of conflict and the divergent orientations of cultural policies in the countries composing the region have driven these regions apart and made any attempt to address the region as one cultural whole a complicated venture.

The 'Greater Somalia' (*Somaliweyn*) agenda of the first post-colonial governments in Mogadishu led to a long conflict with Kenya (from 1963 to the mid-1980s) and the Ogaden war with Ethiopia (1977-78). Somali secessionism in Ethiopia continued in the 1990s and 2000s, leading to the brutal suppression of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) until the movement was rehabilitated by Prime Minister Abiy in 2018. In Kenya there are no more secessionist Somali movements but there are concerns that the Somalis will side with the Muslim coast in its long conflict with the inland ('upcountry') tribes, and of course fear of terrorist attacks. This incentivises the national governments of both countries to try to integrate Somali communities into a national political culture that is based neither on ethnicity nor on religion.[7]

In Somaliland a national 'Somaliland' culture has emerged that is based on adherence to national symbols (the flag, the anthem) and the rejection of reunification with federal Somalia. Artists who show acceptance of federal Somalia by performing in Mogadishu or giving interviews on federal media can be persecuted by Somaliland's authorities, although some pragmatism prevails: high-profile people are not treated in the same way as young and lesser-known ones. Similarly, artists that argue for the independence of Somaliland are not treated kindly by Puntland and federal authorities, although Somalilanders in general are welcome, especially in Mogadishu. Within Federal Somalia the conflict between the central government and the regional states may encourage the emergence of local cultural identities; to an extent this has happened already in Puntland. But creating a 'Jubaland', 'Galmudug' or 'Rahanweyn' identity on a cultural basis does not seem to be a priority for any of the regional governments, for the time being.

At the popular (i.e. non-political) level there is much less animosity, and Somalis generally accept each other regardless of origin. Informants in Mogadishu repeated the view that Somaliland and Puntland, because of their peace and higher levels of education, are better places for the development of culture

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[7] This leaves a role for language, which is not targeted today, even though in the past linguistic assimilation (to English/Swahili and Amhara/Oromo) led to the loss of linguistic skills.

than South and Central Somalia. Artists in these regions, vice versa, long to go to Mogadishu to connect to wider audiences and increase their opportunities. At the popular level the division into majority vs minority clans still plays a role, but less so in the cultural sector than elsewhere in society. Kenyan Somalis often enjoy a higher status as they are generally better educated and speak more English, allowing them to get better NGO jobs in Somalia; but they are often gently derided by other Somalis because of their lack of linguistic and cultural Somali knowledge.[8] Ethiopian Somalis are rarely seen outside of Ethiopia but seem to be equally welcome.

As a result of these dynamics, a region-wide programme has more chances of success as a 'bottom-up' venture, connecting Somali artists and audiences across borders, than in a 'top-down' approach trying to bring together authorities in the different regions of the Horn of Africa in a common programme.

## 3.3. Mapping Actors and Entry Points

An extensive mapping exercise was undertaken across the region in order to:

- Identify culture institutions and potential partners in the RPHoA region;
- Identify on-going donor initiatives and potential synergies in the culture sector;
- Identify new potential initiatives not supported by others geared towards culture;
- Identify concrete entry points of engagement for the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage and artistic expression such as, but not limited to music, poetry or a combination.

In pursuing these objectives, a significant amount of data was gathered through field interviews and meetings. This information can be found in Annex 2 at the end of this report, which is structured by stakeholder type, starting with *national governments,* followed by *funders*, *multinationals and NGOs, and artists, creatives* and *local organisations.* Within each category, we provide a systematic description of stakeholders by region. For each type of organisation, we provide **concrete entry points** for SDC to engage (highlighted in blue boxes). Where there are no immediate or obvious entry points, we provide a short **assessment** of each stakeholder explaining why.

A reference index is provided below to facilitate navigation, and to allow quick access to relevant sections. In those areas where we indicate 'no entry points' we issue the caveat that there may be opportunities of which we are not aware.

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[8] They are jokingly referred to as '*sijui*', which means "I don't know" in Swahili.

| | Organisation | Entry Point | Reference |
|---|---|---|---|
| **National Government** | Federal Government of Somalia | No entry points | Read more |
| | Puntland Government | Mapping cultural heritage, heritage conservation | Read more |
| | Somaliland Government | No entry points | Read more |
| | Ethiopia Government (Somali Region) | Support to collaborations between the Culture and Tourism Office, Jigjiga University and NGOs for cultural heritage documentation and preservation<br><br>Provide fellowships for the exchange of graduate students & researchers between Jigjiga university, Addis and other Ethiopian universities in broadly cultural disciplines<br><br>Eventually provide some direct support to the CTO's cultural programming. | Read more |
| | Kenyan Government (North-Eastern Provinces) | Support to the Wajir Museum for cultural exhibitions | Read more |
| **Funders** | Donors | Opportunities to explore co-funding with the Netherlands Embassy, the British Council and SIDA. Alignment with UN stabilisation programmes and further collaboration with EU. | Read more |
| | Diaspora | No entry point | Read more |
| | Commercial | No entry point | Read more |
| **Multinational organisations and INGOs** | UNESCO | Support to re-vitalise 'Friends of Somalia' cultural coordination platform. | Read more |
| | CISP | Key implementation partner. Funding to focus on events and public workshops/displays. | Read more |
| | Steve Turner / Barkulan Trust | Actively seeking funding to produce photography books based on other Somali towns and digitisation of Radio Mogadishu archives. | Read more |
| | SOMAAC | In infancy, but could be good strategic partner for administering micro-grants for cultural initiatives. | Read more |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Rift Valley Institute | Cross-border research programme should be expanded to include culture. Oral History programme could be a starting point. | [Read more](#) |
| | Interpeace, Life and Peace Institute and other mediation organisations | No entry points in the short term | [Read more](#) |
| | Horn Heritage | Support their effort to map disappearing cultural heritage in Somaliland and ESR through a publicly accessible digital database | [Read more](#) |
| | Selam Ethiopia | Support projects like bringing the Dur-Dur band to Addis & Jigjiga and youth peace and cooperation circus in Dire Dawa | [Read more](#) |
| | Addis Ababa | Continued funding of the Addis Foto Fest – maybe with focus on women/Somali subjects and support to other cultural platforms intent on integrating Somali artists into their programming | [Read more](#) |
| Artists and Creatives | Kenya North Eastern Provinces | Provide a platform for young artists. Potential collaboration with Mandera Got Talent. | [Read more](#) |
| | Nairobi/Eastleigh | Continued funding of the Awjaama Cultural Centre, and specifically the Somali Heritage Week; collaboration with Thrive to support Somali refugees, potentially connecting handicraft items to other cultural events supported by SDC; potential collaboration with Star FM and Eastleighwood. | [Read more](#) |
| | Mogadishu | Network strengthening, events funding. Partner with ArtCH and CISP. Potential co-financing of non-governmental physical cultural centre with the support of other donors. | [Read more](#) |
| | South and Central Somalia | Support creation of cultural productions for radio and support books celebrating local culture; funding non-P/CVE oriented activities of NGOs for social reconciliation campaigns and for regional cultural research. | [Read more](#) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Puntland | Funding cultural events through PYAN, with the supervision of the PDRC. Explore reopening of Awjaama regional office. | [Read more](#) |
| | Somaliland | SOCSA requires funding. Establish market linkages between handicraft producers and retailers (Asli Mills). Potential for vocational training programme. | [Read more](#) |
| | Jigjiga | Support Talent Youth Association to establish an office in Jigjiga from which it can support local youth, women, cultural and other civil society groups. | [Read more](#) |
| | Dire Dawa | Peacebuilding among Oromo and Somali communities in Dire Dawa through circus activities | [Read more](#) |

## 3.4. Summary of Key Needs in the Culture Sector

Taken together, there are four overarching needs across the culture sector in the region:

| Finding | Need |
|---|---|
| There is poor regional coordination of cultural programming between governments, donors and multilaterals. Interest in cultural programming among government and donors is low. | Improved coordination between government, donors and multilaterals. Stronger advocacy for cultural programming. |
| The culture sector is highly fragmented, with poor physical and institutional infrastructure to link cultural actors. | Greater non-governmental physical and institutional infrastructure to bring cultural actors, artists and organisations together. |
| Tangible and intangible cultural heritage is at risk from neglect and lack of interest, both at a political level and among citizens. | Research, conservation and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. |
| Culture is an important avenue for youth self-expression. | Greater access to funding for artists and creatives. Outlets / avenues/ platforms for youth, women and minorities self-expression. |

Underlying these sector-specific needs are more general socio-economic imperatives that could be addressed through cultural programming: notably *youth unemployment* and *gender inequality*, both of which are well documented in the policy and practitioner literature.[9]

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[9] For example: https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/eastern-and-southern-africa/somalia; UNDP: Gender in Somalia. Brief; https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/somalia-lost-generation-youth-unemployment-stability ; ILO (2019): https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_734237.pdf

# 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section contains our ***direction-setting recommendations for SDC's 12-year strategic engagement*** in the culture sector. Bringing together the overarching needs for the culture sector across the region, and the specific entry points identified through interviews with culture organisations, we outline a number of broad avenues for SDC to consider as part of its strategic planning process.

Our recommendations are formulated within the context of ***SDC's comparative advantages*** over other organisations working in this space, and within the constraints of SDC's predicted budget allocations for this type of work.

Regardless of the direction SDC wishes to take its strategic engagement for culture in the region, it is our view that virtually ***all forms of cultural programming prima facie make an implicit contribution to social cohesion, inclusion and peacebuilding.*** This is especially true for activities that promote or encourage self-expression and cultural diversity such as events, exhibitions, festivals and performances. This is aligned with SDC's own assumptions, as outlined in the *Culture and Development Policy*, which notes that the culture sector 'encourages inclusion and social cohesion.'[10] However, attempts to brand, or even design, projects under the banner of *inclusion* or *cohesion* may risk attracting cynicism at best, or (like P/CVE) outright suspicion and hostility. These objectives should be considered as long-term effects, rather than explicit programme/project goals.

In view of SDC's 12-year planning horizon, we see this timescale as an opportunity to test and refine ideas on a local (national) level before scaling to a regional level. All of the projects identified below are formulated with this regional growth expectation in mind.

This section is intended to provide a basis for SDC's future internal planning discussions for the 12-year strategic engagement plan, and is not presented as a blueprint for the strategy itself, nor is the list of ideas exhaustive or definitive.

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[10] SDC (2016): Culture and Development Policy. P.16

## 4.1. Define Strategic Priorities

*SDC should begin by defining clear strategic objectives for its culture programme.* There are clearly any number of areas in which SDC could invest money in cultural programming as shown throughout Annex 2, however, we recommend delivering strategic engagement in four thematic programmatic pillars, reflecting the core overarching needs of the culture sector and the wider development needs in the region:

| Pillar | Objectives | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| Pillar 1: Policy and Advocacy | To mainstream culture within the broader development policy landscape. | Dialogue with governments, multilateral and donor stakeholders. |
| Pillar 2: Building Linkages between culture-sector actors | To foster a more collaborative creative environment across the region. | Strengthening physical and institutional infrastructure to bring cultural actors, artists and organisations together. |
| Pillar 3: Preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage | To protect cultural heritage from neglect, damage and loss; To create learning/ teaching resources. | Support research, documentation, conservation and dissemination of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. |
| Pillar 4: Promotion of contemporary and traditional culture, also in regional metropoles | To support creativity and artistic expression, increase capacity and exposures | Support grass-roots cultural activities and providing outlets / avenues/ platforms for youth self-expression. |

These pillars are mutually reinforcing, and there may be activities that contribute to multiple pillars. For example, funding a festival would *promote* culture and *build linkages* between cultural organisations that participate.

*SDC's work across these four pillars should contribute to two parallel strategic themes: inclusive economic growth and gender.*

| Strategic Theme | Objectives | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| Theme 1: Inclusive economic growth | To create employment and income for marginalised groups, including youths and women. | Conducting market opportunity mapping; Supporting growth in the culture creative industry. |
| Theme 2: Gender | To strengthen women's role in society. | Supporting female artists; Supporting female enterprises / initiatives. |

In designing activities for each of the core programme pillars, SDC should give preference to those that contribute to inclusive economic growth and gender, as these tie closely into broader regional development priorities and national policy frameworks. These activities would also provide 'off-the-shelf' projects to market to the wider development and donor community, providing tangible examples of the role of culture in social and economic development.

## 4.2. Design Programme Activities

### Pillar 1: Policy and Advocacy

Culture is not a priority for national governments or the international donor community.

***SDC should position itself as a 'champion' for culture in the region.*** There is an important gap in the cultural landscape in the RPHoA among multilateral organisations and donors. UNESCO is at the forefront of leading broad cultural policy reforms and government capacity building, but there are no other organisations with the means, capacity or ambition to fund cultural programmes on the ground. SDC is therefore well placed to position itself as a 'champion' in the field of culture, leveraging its strong track record of project delivery and unique neutral status to promote the importance of cultural programming among other donors and NGOs, and to build consensus between the region's often-polarised national governments and among donors and policy makers.

A number of actions can be taken:

- ***Promote the role of culture in achieving social and economic development outcomes.*** SDC should position itself as a key entry point for cultural programming, facilitating other organisations that wish to work in this space. This could entail a range of activities including:
  - ***Promoting ideas exchange workshops/events*** with other donors/NGOs working on wider development agenda. Inclusive discussions could be organised by various topics loosely structured around the theme of 'the role of culture in health service delivery,' or 'the role of culture in post-conflict reconciliation'.
  - Linked to this, SDC should ***publish reports and other knowledge products***. A truncated version of this report, for example, would be a useful resource for organisations working in the sector, seeking new programme opportunities or cultural initiatives to fund. Other material to publish could include workshop outputs (see above) and other thematic research pieces.
  - ***Exploring opportunities for scaling cultural initiatives through collaboration with non-cultural development programmes*** implemented/funded by others. In Ethiopia, for example, the Comprehensive Refugee Reintegration Programme (CRRP) could provide an opportunity to integrate cultural initiatives (events etc.) to strengthen social cohesion with host communities. USAID is funding the Integrated Youth Activity Programme, also in Ethiopia. The programme aims to empower youth to advance their own social, economic and civic development. Implemented by CARE, this could be an

interesting avenue to explore further. Similar programmes are being delivered by NGOs across the region.

- o *Engage in bilateral discussions with other donors* – Aleph's short time in the field uncovered strong interest in cultural programming at the EU delegation in Mogadishu, at the Dutch Embassy and the Heinrich Böll Stiftung in Nairobi and at the British Council and the Swedish International Development Agency in Addis Ababa. SDC should pursue discussions with these potential partners once it has a clear direction for its strategic engagement in the culture sector. Other bilateral or multilateral donor agencies with an interest in culture may be identified by SDC through its contacts with these organisations. We are aware that interest in culture is sometimes personal, rather than institutional, so this recommendation is time-sensitive. Some of these donors may also have small-actions funds that could be directed towards cultural programming, and that could form the basis of pooled funding managed by a third-party.

- *Ensure that regional messaging and communications content continually reiterates linkages between culture and wider socio-economic development outcomes.* Cultural programming could be 'packaged' in a variety of ways to encourage participation from the wider donor and government community. Interviews with key stakeholders across the sector, and a detailed reading of national policy literature, show that there are four 'flagship' development policy areas that resonate among government and donor stakeholders. These are: *youth*, *inclusive economic growth, gender* and *civil society.* To this list could be added nuanced sub-variations such as *social cohesion, women's economic empowerment, employment, vocational training, enterprise development* etc.  Cultural programmes that can be linked to these areas are likely to find broad support from other potential funders and national governments. SDC's 12-year culture strategic engagement plan could, therefore, contain a number of outcome objectives linked to:

  1. *Social cohesion* – containing initiatives that promote intercommunal (or interethnic) dialogue, cultural diversity and expression, such as events and exhibitions;

  2. *Economic inclusion for women and youths* – containing initiatives aimed at vocational training, market development, etc.;

  3. *Civil society* – containing initiatives that give a voice to minority or underrepresented groups (migrants, women, youths etc.).

- *Engage with national government counterparts in a continual effort to ensure culture is considered a priority for regional development.* As above, linking cultural programmes to wider national development priorities may open discussions with other line ministries.[11] Direct engagement with the respective ministries responsible for culture should proceed as part of SDC's standard government dialogue. We advise against engaging directly in policy reform activities or government capacity building initiatives. Although there is a clear need for this work, these are areas traditionally filled by UNESCO, and are often extremely expensive and time-consuming. However, at a local level, proactive local cultural authorities can partner on projects delivered by local civil society organisations funded by SDC.

## Pillar 2: Building linkages between culture sector actors

Building linkages between culture sector actors should be a long-term goal delivered in stages:

- In the early stages, *SDC's activities should simply <u>encourage</u> collaboration and coordination between organisations wherever possible.* This could entail investing in partnership ventures that organise recurring cultural events, to provide regular focal points for culture sector actors (see also recommendations under 'Promotion'). As these activities become more established within the local area, and as word spreads throughout the creative community, funding could be scaled to facilitate expansion (franchising?) into other locations across the Somali region. For example, SDC could offer funding for activities spread out over a year organised by a consortium of partners, whereby the mode of collaboration is at least as important as the content of the programme. Collaboration between different types of organisations – for example a university, a local youth group, local authorities, a private local company and an INGO specialising in training; or between a cultural group, a local media partner and a women's development LNGO - is particularly promising in terms of long-term sustainability. Encouraging the establishment of links between such partners around a commonly funded project serves to consolidate cross-linkages in the cultural sector, instead of creating multiple dependencies on external donors. Sustainability in the cultural sector could also be encouraged by routinely requesting organisations to provide a realistic business or development plan.
- Mogadishu is the place where the necessity to connect artists, cultural producers, disseminators and audiences, is most pressing. ArtCH and CISP (with its local partners) provide

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[11] Note that the review team was unable to engage with 'non-culture' line ministries due to time constraints. As noted previously, the focus remained firmly on those government departments directly responsible for culture.

good entry points for this build-up, but there are certainly other groups of artists that could be engaged. While ArtCH is more interested in contemporary filmmaking and documentation, CISP's local partners specialise in art therapy and psychosocial emancipation through art. Given the current security situation, large-scale events are not desirable or feasible in Mogadishu, so small-scale interventions will be the norm; at least in the first years, as the security situation will hopefully improve. Some of Mogadishu's busy restaurants, such as Pizza House in Hodan or Beach View and Lido Beach on the coastline, are good places for showcasing arts, even though announced live events may still be problematic. Star FM would be a willing media partner, but others can be found. Events could include pop-up fashion shows, movie evenings, photography and art exhibitions, theatre performances, open-mike sessions, moderated debates about cultural issues and eventually concerts.

- *Later, SDC could consider investing in physical infrastructure.* Establishing physical buildings – whether creative hubs, cooperatives or cultural centres – can be costly. Within SDC's available budget window of c. CHF 400,000 per year, we think these funds could be distributed more effectively to the other programme pillars in the short term. Should SDC succeed in mobilising additional donor funding (see recommendations above) establishing physical premises for cultural activities would fill an important gap in the sector, and could form the basis of a regional network of cultural hubs.

## Pillar 3: Preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage

There is a real concern among culture sector stakeholders, that Somali culture is undervalued and understudied, leading to a gradual erosion of traditional practices and built heritage.

- *SDC should fund mapping of tangible and intangible heritage.* A number of stakeholders interviewed in the field research expressed frustration at the perceived lack of interest among government officials across the region in protecting traditional tangible and intangible cultural heritage. There is certainly an appetite among many cultural practitioners for a concerted effort to map cultural heritage before it is lost through wilful destruction or simple neglect. This is a concern voiced in all Somali regions of the Horn of Africa, and it doubtlessly extends to the other people living in the Horn's arid and semi-arid lands, such as part of Oromia. Embarking on this journey opens numerous possibilities to engage with a range of organisations and individuals across the cultural sector. There are a number of locally-based organisation that would be well-positioned to deliver this work. The Rift Valley Institute might be a willing lead

partner for such projects, which could be divided into several components: oral history, intangible (songs, poetry, crafts etc.) and built heritage (including archaeological sites). Other logical partners would be Horn Heritage, PDRC, Awjaama Cultural Centre; museums (Wajir, Saryan) and universities. There is potential to engage local artists and creatives (who need income) to conduct these activities on a paid basis under the supervision of a lead organisation. For example, musicians, dancers, craftsmen, singers, writers and poets could each 'map' the cultural heritage in their field. Diaspora specialists could be invited through mobility grants to participate or lead such efforts. The creative industry more widely could also be involved to create engaging media and learning content (videographers, filmmakers, photographers etc.). A professional music label such as Selam Ethiopia may be helpful in the documentation process. Further, Media Ink in Hargeisa and BarKulan Trust in Mogadishu could help digitise the local radio archives, feeding into a large open-access digital museum. Leveraging online platforms for knowledge sharing may also open the door to funding from diaspora organisations (e.g. the Somali Museum in Minnesota).

- *Within this body of work, SDC should support the mapping and promotion of the Somali language.* As noted previously, while Somali ethnicity, nationality and religion could be flash points for conflict in some parts of the region, the Somali language presents fewer opportunities for conflict. Many informants expressed a concern that the Somali language is becoming impoverished, through the loss of regional dialects (belonging to marginalised minority groups), the lack of proper standardisation and the gradual erosion of traditional linguistic forms through 'careless' (slang) online usage. SDC should consider projects that protect and conserve the Somali language. SOMASA would be one of the logical partners for these types of activity, as well as Jigjiga University, which hosts the Somali Language Institute. Universities with functioning research departments could be partners in this project too, as well as individual Somali scholars who have already published academic level research. Foreign universities with Somali language departments (Roma III, Uppsala, SOAS...) could be requested to partner on this project too.

Each town in South Central Somalia has a distinct identity, and many of them have their own dialects. It would be possible to capture this diversity by the publication of books which are collectively produced by the local cultural and intellectual community. A book could be produced discretely and need not draw the attention of Al Shabaab or other conservative local groups. In places with more freedom like Baidoa and Kismayo this effort could also lead to live

events, such as singing, concerts, dancing and poetry recitals, or exhibitions. This project can also be linked to the cultural mapping project described above. Some capacity building of the contributors is necessary, as well as editorial oversight and good layout skills. Each year, a different locality could be selected, on the basis of its historical and contemporary cultural relevance: besides the mentioned places, Baraawe, Beled Weyne, Jowhar, Dhusamareeb and Hobyo would be likely candidates. Bar Kulan Trust could be entrusted with this effort as they have a good presence in these areas and have already produced such a book on Merka.

- *SDC should also support Puntland's Ministry of Information, Heritage, Culture and Tourism in its first heritage conservation and development efforts.* This may depend on an external party willing to provide an expert in conservation to supervise the conservation works and train local staff. Although the Ministry suggested a fort of the Dervish leader at Geedda Mirale near Garowe, the real priority seems to be the impressive fort in Eyl, where the previous director of the Somali National Museum, Mr. Diriyoos, has set up a small museum. Eyl is a prime location for Somali tourism development, with its beautiful landscapes and lush beaches (it is also very stable and peaceful). The fort near Garowe could perhaps be used for a pilot project. Involved parties for a project like the one at Geedda Mirale, besides the Ministry and an external expert agency like UNESCO or the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, would be local photographers, a youth group willing to train its members in heritage conservation and a university department interested in cultural research. In Eyl the local authorities and a private hospitality company could be added to such a heritage preservation consortium.

- *SDC should support outreach and educational activities to build awareness of Somalia's rich built and archaeological cultural heritage.* This work could focus on young people in the towns of Somaliland and ESR. Horn Heritage or the Hargeisa Cultural Centre would be a logical lead partner, while youth groups such as SOYVO in Burco and Culture and Unity in Jigjiga could organise outreach, documentation and dissemination, and universities from the region can cooperate, including Addis and/or Nairobi.

The activities above could contribute to a regional digital archive, providing an important learning and teaching resource for scholars, students, practitioners and policy makers.

## Pillar 4: Promotion of contemporary and traditional culture

The region's vibrant cultural scene provides an important outlet for youth self-expression. Supporting creative initiatives should therefore be a core part of any strategic engagement plan SDC wishes to develop. As SDC notes in its own Culture and Development Policy: cultural programmes have their own legitimacy, and quoting the Senegalese poet Léopold Sédar Senghor: 'culture stands at the beginning and end of all development.'[12]

Although many of the recommendations below have a localised application, SDC should view these activities as pilots, which could, if successful, scale to a regional level.

- *SDC should allocate grants for small-scale grass-roots cultural initiatives administered by an implementing partner or external fiduciary actor.* However, SDC decides to allocate funds for different elements of the annual budget, we recommend that a proportion is set aside for a small-grants award programme aimed at supporting organisations and artists in the culture sector. This approach provides significant flexibility, allowing SDC to recalibrate its strategic focus each year (the first year could focus on projects that deliver against social cohesion objectives; the second year could focus on projects that deliver against women's economic empowerment, etc.). While these types of award scheme do require intensive oversight and management, they provide space for the creative sector to design diverse and interesting projects, and encourages community-led initiatives. The grants could support anything from events funding to equipment purchase, to transportation, so long as they met that year's strategic focus. Limits could be set for each type of grant. For example, events grants could be maximum 5,000 USD (5/year) and mobility grants maximum 1500 USD for flights and eventually accommodation (10/year) for a total of 40,000 USD/CHF per year. Larger grant values could be considered on an ad hoc basis depending on the scale of the initiative.

- *SDC should facilitate a roving '…Got Talent' show in North-Eastern Kenya* - This would provide an outlet for Somali youth self-expression, further social integration and cohesion between Somali and Kenyan communities, and help to support the local entertainment market. This would involve a central partner like Eastleighwood, local youth groups, local media (TV and FM), A/V production studios and local authorities who could provide venues. The winners of the contests could be invited to perform at a central Nairobi venue like 254 or the Alliance Française, trying to draw the attention of nationwide TVs and radio stations. In subsequent

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[12] SDC (2016): Culture and Development Policy, p.26 and p.5 respectively

years, different counties could be targeted. Somali refugee communities and young women could be encouraged to participate through the provision of a few slots for these groups. The review team also encountered a 'Puntland Got Talent' project proposal from the Puntland Youth Association Network, which could also be explored further by SDC. For the time being, cross border 'got talent' shows are unlikely to succeed given the costs and difficulties travelling between countries in the RPHoA; social media dissemination is more efficient.

- *SDC should support small-scale local initiatives to use culture for peacebuilding purposes.* When tensions between communities flare up, they are mostly between youth, and such conflict is partially fuelled by lack of gainful occupations, an impression that one's community is economically disadvantaged (for example unfair access to jobs) and a feeling that one's culture is being threatened. A cultural initiative like the Dire Dawa circus that brings together the kind of youngsters most likely to fight, in a common project exploring one of these issues, may help defuse tensions while providing entertainment to the rest of the community. With a partner such as the Talent Youth Association it may be possible to explore such alternative forms of community peacebuilding among other population groups in the lowlands (Somalis, Oromos, Afars in Ethiopia, Borama, Garre and Degodia in North East Kenya).

- *SDC should support cultural awareness raising efforts for political transition.* It seems the efforts of Puntland's authorities to transition to a new and more democratic political system are genuine; but this is a long-term project that may take a generation to really take root. SDC should build upon the will of many of Puntland's youth to effectuate that transition by supporting cultural awareness raising efforts throughout Puntland's districts, at the same time bringing together many of the cultural actors in the autonomous state. The lead partner should be the PDRC, with its mobile cinema reconciliation unit; additional partners could be PYAN, with its network of youth organisations spanning the country; the (Transitional) Puntland Electoral Commission; and local groups of artists and cultural activists. This awareness-raising effort through culture could be monitored, analysed and redirected by researchers at PDRC and rolled out very gradually over a 12-year period. This approach can be replicated in other parts of the RPHoA where similar democratisation programmes are taking place. For example, in the Ethiopian Somali region, cultural programming could be employed to strengthen social cohesion and reduce inter-ethnic tensions during the upcoming electoral process in Dire Dawa. SDC can also engage partners in the upcoming 2022 local council elections in Somaliland, alongside the EU which is already funding political awareness raising through culture (see

Masaf Art in Somaliland); or complement with cultural programming the efforts by the Center for Research and Development (CRD), funded by Finnish Church Aid, to introduce democratic governance in districts in South and Central Somalia (Xudur, Berdale, Galkacyo, Afmadow).

- *SDC should support Ethiopian Somali Youth Entertainment and Mobilisation.* The Culture and Unity youth group could be funded for a project to travel around the Ethiopian Somali region bringing a mix of cultural entertainment to the people: besides film showings, they organise games, music and dance, poetry and singing. They have been doing this in and around Jigjiga, but they would like to travel further through the Ethiopian Somali region, Addis and Hargeisa. Besides entertaining, they desire to study and document local forms of culture such as traditional games. Given that the Ethiopian Somalis rarely mingle with the rest of the Somalis (they can and do cross the open border mostly for grazing and trade, but do not openly mingle with cross-border populations to avoid troubles with their own authorities) such cultural exchanges could be rewarding. A Hargeisa-based group could apply for an event grant to host the young Ethiopians' traveling cultural show.

- *SDC can help increase exposure of non-Somalis in Ethiopia and Kenya to Somali culture* in an effort to build a platform for Somali culture at a national level, and to avoid marginalisation. For example, SDC could fund the participation of Somali artists in national festivals through mobility or other small grants. Selam Ethiopia has plans to invite the Dur-Dur band to Addis for a festival; this band could then also play in Jigjiga and Hargeisa. Similarly, some recordings exist of collaborations between Somali, Afar and other Ethiopian musicians, which could be released by a World Music label to sensitise international audiences to the potential of contemporary Somali music.

## Inclusive Economic Growth

High levels of youth unemployment could be addressed through targeted market interventions to support the culture and creative industries.

- *During the early stage of SDC's 12-year strategic engagement period, SDC should also undertake a thorough assessment of the culture creative industries*, seeking to identify specific barriers to economic growth and opportunities for job creation for women and young people. This would likely need to be undertaken on a national, rather than regional context to begin with, although there may be value chains that span multiple countries in the region. [DFID's](#)

This is a far more detailed exercise than the high-level mapping carried out in this study. Value chains in the creative industries (like any other) are nebulous and complex, and should be carefully mapped out to identify potential areas for targeted support, and to identify the potential domestic (and foreign) consumer markets. A thorough market study could also identify opportunities to pivot traditional skillsets towards modern consumer demands, while at the same time identifying outlets for traditional items (tourist shops, museums, cultural centres etc.) to ensure that traditional artforms are continued. SDC should encourage inclusive and participatory 'citizen research' by engaging with local culture value chain actors (producers of artwork/handicraft etc.) to conduct this research. This would serve the twin purposes of generating direct income for local actors, and creating a strong evidence base for future investment.

## 4.3. Create links with SDC's wider strategic priorities in the RPHoA

SDC's programmes in the RPHoA region fall into four domains: i) food security, ii) health, iii) governance, and iv) migration/protection. There are two transversal themes: gender and conflict sensitivity.

This study did not identify any entry points linked to *food security* or *governance*, nor, explicitly to *conflict sensitivity*, although a number of projects could be conceived as such. As noted above, we view *gender* as a fundamental basis of SDC's strategic engagement plan in the region.

There are two further areas in which SDC could link cultural activities to its wider strategic priorities: *migration* and *health*.

- *Migration/protection.* SDC should partially fund a consortium of partners including Awjaama Cultural Centre, Thrive, Kenyan handicrafts shops, vocational training institutes and Kenyan designers to improve the quality and contemporary relevance of Somali handicrafts production, whereby the focus would be on Somali women refugees. The designers could work with (self-funded) vocational training institutes to impart the necessary skills. Thrive could mobilise the women – both as skilled craftspeople and as trainees – and Awjaama could provide the facilities for production, while Kenyan handicrafts vendors sell the products. As Awjaama has done previously, this could be linked to the Somali Heritage Week so that the new designs and products are showcased once yearly. SDC can leverage the Heinrich Böll Foundation and other donors (such as embassies in Nairobi that have small grants) to sponsor the Somali Heritage Week and seek to increase media exposure. Kenyan markets attract foreign tourists with ready cash to spend on locally-produced handicrafts, so there is a well-established precedent for these types of product, reducing the risk of creating new dependencies on donor

funding. Longer term, if Somali handicrafts can indeed gain a foothold in the Kenyan market, SDC could explore building supply chains in Somalia itself, connected to female producer groups.

- *Health* provides a potential entry point for cultural programming across the region, particularly in areas where conservative cultural values could create barriers to projects that are overtly branded as 'cultural'. The Somaliland Culture and Sport Association (SOCSA) provides a potential model for such an approach. Established by a former Somali female basketball champion, SOCSA offers sport facilities for the exclusive use of women in the centre of Hargeisa. Cultural activities have also been offered in the past, but have been discontinued for lack of funding. SOCSA has a nice collection of handicrafts and the director clearly has interest in preserving the associated knowledge. To build on this, an alliance could be set up with Banfas School of Art, one of the many vocational training organisations operating in Hargeisa, the shop Asli Mills and a magazine developing a 'Somaliland lifestyle' section integrating cultural heritage into interior designs, to offer a sports-and-arts programme for Somali girls and women with which they can earn revenue while having fun and remaining healthy, fighting the tendency to obesity which comes with Salafism's and Covid-19 injunctions to women to stay at home. The Gabooye minority community could especially profit from such a programme as they already suffer from the stigma of using their hands to work.

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# 6. ANNEX 2: MAPPING ACTORS AND ENTRY POINTS

## 6.1. National Governments

In general, non-governmental informants across the RPHoA were critical of the activities of national authorities in the cultural field, apart from the Ethiopian Somali region and Puntland where attitudes were more neutral. Given the lack of artistic freedom, it is difficult for local artists to circumvent local authorities (and national ones in Mogadishu) but each artist has developed ways to deal with authorities. A direct engagement of SDC with governments seems unnecessary and possibly counterproductive, as it could increase the stakes and reinforce gatekeeper attitudes.

### Federal Government of Somalia

*Discussions were held with the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism; the Department of Culture; the Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts (SOMASA) which falls under the Ministry of Education; the Mogadishu City Council; the Mogadishu Department of Social Affairs.*

Government capacity is weak but this is not primarily due to a lack of resources or the adverse security situation, but to a fundamental lack of interest in the cultural sector. Local informants report that federal institutions spend most of their time engaged in internal politicking, power-play and infighting, with little attention to their actual mandates. Certainly, it was a struggle for the fieldwork team to secure interviews with government representatives on the strength of conducting work for SDC on cultural programming. While the fieldwork did coincide with the replacement of Minister 'Mareeye', and the passing of a Public Broadcasting Act, the lack of interest in this study (which could have potentially led to more funding opportunities for the government) was conspicuous.

There has been little growth in federal government capacity in the field of culture since 2013, when UNESCO conducted a thorough culture sector scoping exercise. According to UNESCO, the findings of this study remain just as relevant today, having been validated several times by Somali government officials over the last two years.[13] Cultural policies are still non-existent, and implementation capacity is extremely low. Implementation capacity is further undermined by the rivalry between the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Education, which until recently was called the Ministry of Education and Culture, over which ministry is more eligible to receive donor funding in the

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[13] Key informant interview with UNESCO. UNESCO has held workshops with officials in Somalia to revisit the findings and recommendations of the report

field of culture. In general, it seems the former has a more general mandate, and the latter a specific mandate in the field of cultural research and education; but many ambiguities remain and are settled not by closer definitions of institutional mandates, but by the personalities involved. One person at the Ministry of Education was thus seen as monopolizing all funding for culture accruing to the federal government.

There is no evidence of any kind of cultural programming (such as building cultural institutions and infrastructure, supporting local organisations, contracting local craftsmen or artists, or preserving heritage) besides organising events during national or regional celebrations. When asked about the most recent performances of arts in Baidoa, for example, it appeared they took place during the inauguration in January 2019 of the new President of South West State. Federal and local authorities can typically count on police and military bands for public events, and in Mogadishu a band called 'Waaberi' operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (they are based at the National Theatre). The latter are professional musicians who compose their own songs with socially relevant lyrics and vary their repertoire. The state capitals were not visited as part of this study so it is possible that such activities do take place here and there. The federal government does not allow civil society to produce performances in their facilities. The National Theatre is for government functions only; though no theatre performances have actually taken place there. Public cultural events require a license to take place, but these seem to be relatively easily acquired.

Generally, research informants prefer authorities not to take the lead in building the cultural sector, as they fear governments will only use it for public messaging and stifle rather than encourage creativity. For example, during the consultants' visit to Mogadishu the Public Broadcasting Corporation was inaugurated, but it is public only in name and has drawn criticism for reinforcing government control over the broadcasting sector.[14]

This negative perception applies to state governments but applies less to smaller government organs and local authorities. The Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts could play a role in cultural development, although views of the Academy's capacity were also quite negative[15]. Local authorities are generally viewed more positively as they are seen to have a bigger stake in local cultural life. The

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[14] One informant who had been involved in the process explained that the internationally funded public broadcasting act had involved media professionals and civil society organisations in a wide consultation process, but the Ministry entirely rewrote the plan before it passed through parliament; as a result the media landscape has become more restrictive, with the introduction of higher licensing fees and more restrictions on content.

[15] For example, a two-day international seminar on the Somali language was held at SOMASA while the researchers were in Mogadishu; scholars had been flown in from the regions and even abroad. Participants however confided it had been a 'waste of time' as the event had been poorly managed and little substantial discussion took place, as one government official after the other delivered speeches.

Mogadishu City Council has embarked on an urban conservation scheme with an EU-funded, UN Habitat and World Bank implemented urban regeneration plan, and informants viewed some of the key people working there positively.[16]

We note one encouraging development since the 2013 UNESCO report: the recent ratification of two UNESCO conventions on the protection of cultural heritage in June 2020.[17] This should precipitate legislative and policy developments in support of cultural heritage, but there has been little movement in this direction since the summer.

**Assessment:** As concerns the Federal Government, we therefore reiterate the recommendation of our literature review: *we are hesitant to recommend that SDC engages directly in policy development work with the national government.* The reasons are: lack of institutional capacity, lack of political will, danger of programme funds being trapped by gatekeepers, and insufficiency of SDC budgets to motivate federal agencies' participation in the first place. Naturally, it is important that SDC engages with the government as a matter of course, but we do not envisage broad strategic objectives linked to government capacity development or policy reform, and nor do we think significant (if any) funds should be allocated for these purposes. Should the need arise to demonstrate alignment of SDC cultural programming in Somalia with those of the Federal Government, the synergies between SDC's program objectives and those contained in the sections on culture in the various national documents reviewed in the literature review could be mentioned.[18]

## Puntland Government

*Interviews held with the Ministry of Information, Telecommunication, Heritage, Culture and Tourism (PL MoITHCT); Puntland's Transitional Electoral Commission.*

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[16] The previous mayor of Mogadishu, Engineer Yarisow, assassinated by Al Shabaab, was a popular person in the cultural community; but the new mayor, Omar Mohamud Finnish, is not: he's considered a political appointee without a true interest in developing the city. However, his team still consists of capable professionals like Mrs. Hodan Ali (Urban Development, reportedly close to the new mayor) and Mr. Cantoobo (Social Affairs).

[17] Somalia has now ratified the World Heritage Convention and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention: https://en.unesco.org/news/somalia-ratifies-two-major-unesco-cultural-conventions

[18] Alignment between SDC and the **National Development Plan** on the subject of *most vulnerable groups*, and the particular focus on women, youths, rural poor and IDPs. The Development Plan's 'cross-cutting imperatives' also provide a natural link to SDC's priorities: strengthening *gender equality* and building *household resilience* could be addressed by supporting female and youth entrepreneurs/artisans working in the creative industries, including (domestic) cultural tourism. Within the **National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism** there is a specific focus on *cultural festivals and events* including cultural festivals and national competitions for artists and artisans. Somalia's **Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018-2020,** lists '*strengthening the research capacity of the Somali Academy for Culture and Heritage*', as a priority under its broader programme objective to strengthen and develop national capacity for research and innovation.

Puntland's government institutions may lack capacity and budget in general, but the institutions we interacted with seemed driven by eager civil servants with some technical capacity. Perceptions among non-government informants were quite positive, suggesting that Puntland government's cultural institutions are ready to work with civil society. Such interactions include working with youths to organise cultural events such as a 'Puntland Got Talent' TV show. Cooperation between the Temporary Puntland Electoral Council (TPEC) and youth groups involving performance art groups was envisaged to raise awareness about the One Person-One Vote district council elections to be held in 2021.

Puntland authorities welcomed the field team and took time to present their strategies and policies. The main, repeatedly formulated request, was support to build a theatre and cultural centre on a plot belonging to the Ministry. Support was also requested for a cultural heritage mapping exercise and some emergency works.

Our meetings only took place in Garowe, Puntland's capital, and it is possible that this inflected the views of our informants toward a positive evaluation of the government. Several important clans feel left out of Puntland's politics (which is dominated by the Mohamud Saleban) and presumably their members are less inclined to align with the government.

*Focus Box 2: Puntland Government Entry Point*

> **ENTRY POINT:** Unlike government institutions in other areas of the Horn of Africa, the Puntland government seems a valid partner for cautious SDC support, preferably in cooperation with civil society partners. Cooperation of SDC with TPEC is already envisaged and SDC might facilitate some additional cultural awareness raising programs. In the field of cultural heritage SDC might support the MoITHCT's efforts to save at-risk monuments. Mapping of cultural heritage is also a potential entry point, as is the funding of a theatre.

## Somaliland Government

*Interviews were conducted with officials from the Department of Archaeology, which falls under the MoTIT.*

Culture is not a priority for the government in Somaliland, be it promotion or protection. Like the Federal Government, ministries and government institutions in Somaliland seem to be entirely hostage to political processes. The division of responsibilities over the cultural sector between ministries does not help. According to informants, government officials in key positions have no commitment to cultural development. The research team was even offered the chance to purchase antiquities from

one government official. The previous Minister of Information, Culture and National Guidance was removed after (very rare) corruption charges were levelled against him.

The research team struggled to secure interviews with government officials. Informants explained this by a pattern of growing suspicion towards foreign organisations sparked by recent developments between the Federal Government and the international community, as well as by the current administration's effort to take full control over national finances and public life. The Ministry of Planning announced on 19th October that it was conducting a full review of all projects of NGOs and international agencies, and that it would take action against all activities not in line with the National Development Plan. SDC should take this into account in all future activities in Somaliland. On 25 October the government of Somaliland suspended relations with all UN agencies.

As Aleph pointed out in the Literature Review produced for this consultancy, "*Somaliland's policies are aligned with SDC in the areas of youth employment and vocational skills training. There is also alignment on marginalised and vulnerable groups, whom the Somaliland Government consider priorities. Youths are a cross-cutting theme, with a particular focus on promoting employment generation and sports activities, and promoting patriotism and a sense of national identity through inter-regional youth activities. The obvious entry point for SDC here is* youth and gender programming*, particularly for activities that support income generation and those that encourage interregional exchange and trade*". But Somaliland's National Development Plan II (2017), which expands upon the Vision 2030, makes no reference to culture at all.

Assessment: As the Ministry of Culture's name suggests, culture is used for national guidance, which in the current autocratic, anti-federal Somalia climate, does not correspond to what most youth are interested in. In the wider framework, however, SDC can support activities that fall within the National Development Plan, but it need not directly engage government agencies to do so.


## Ethiopian Government (Somali Region)

*Interviews conducted with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the Somali Region of Ethiopia, with the Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism and senior politicians.*

For decades the Ethiopian Somali region was ruled in an autocratic manner by Abdi Mohamud Omar, a.k.a. Abdi Iley, a staunch supporter of the Tigray-dominated Ethiopian national government. While the government's main concern was suppressing the rebel movement ONLF, a praetorian local system evolved focused on Abdi Iley, his family and his clan; the President seemed to have limitless power. Culture was part of Abdi Iley's governance tools, and Dhaanto music and dance, in particular, became

popular not only in the Somali region but in other Somali areas. The less religious atmosphere of Jigjiga allowed the performance of female singers and dancers, contributing to the music's popularity throughout the Horn.

In the summer of 2018 Prime Minister Abiy removed Abdi Iley in an effort to liberalise national politics, and as a reaction to the violent purge of Oromos in the Somali region that had led to hundreds of deaths and the gruesome human rights record of Iley. The ONLF was delisted as a terrorist group and the moderate opposition politician Mustafa Omer became President of the Somali Region.

Two years later, Omer has struggled to push through significant reforms, faced with the opposition of the Stalinist political apparatus built up by his predecessor and an atomised political landscape, including an antagonistic ONLF and a subdued, voiceless civil society.[19]

Economically, the region is quite buoyant, profiting from the freedom of movement and enterprise which came with the downfall of the previous regional regime. Conflict and violent clashes have virtually ceased, as have cases of human right's abuses. Importantly, access to international NGOs has increased, permitting a resumption of development programming.

Encouragingly, the Culture and Tourism Office (CTO) in the Somali Region was established in 2019. It works in collaboration with the Somali Region Development Office and the Office of Women, Youth and Children to develop tourism, research and promote culture and forming and supporting youth groups to develop cultural activities. It plans to set up a cultural infrastructure of public libraries and cultural centres and to build a national museum. Plans to establish the first cultural centre on a plot of land it owns were presented to the consultants, but the lack of resources means that for the time being there is no capacity to implement the rest of the plans. It requested the consultants to explore possible SDC support to an upcoming cultural festival it would like to hold. The CTO is actively seeking external financial support.

The CTO focuses on three sectors: heritage preservation, building a cultural infrastructure and promoting live, performing arts. However, it is hamstrung by a general lack of information about the sectors it seeks to protect. Some mapping of historical and heritage sites has taken place in the Somali region by consultants such as Ahmed Zekaria, and the CTO has undertaken to protect the site of Darbi Balanbale by fencing the site in. There is also insufficient data about intangible cultural heritage. The CTO cooperates with Jigjiga University, including its Somali Language Institute (est. 2014) to conduct research, for example by conducting a survey of popular attitudes toward traditional medicine practices. But students and researchers at Jigjiga University lack opportunities to conduct further

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[19] Hagmann, Tobias (2020): Fast politics, slow justice: Ethiopia's Somali region two years after Abdi Iley.

research with academics from Addis Ababa; a scholarship programme to assist exchange between Ethiopian universities may be useful here.

> **ENTRY POINT:** SDC could support a partnership between the CTO, Horn Heritage and Culture and Unity (youth group) to work on heritage mapping and awareness. Within this general multi-year effort a yearly focus might be put on a specific area which is also of interest to university researchers (traditional medicine, conflict resolution, local dialects and lore) or to another research party such as Selam Ethiopia (e.g traditional instruments).
>
> Second, it is worth exploring establishing a fellowship/scholarship or research mobility grant scheme involving at least Jigjiga and Addis Ababa Universities; if successful, this could gradually grow to encompass exchange between universities in Somaliland, Puntland, Federal Somalia and Kenya.
>
> In addition, SDC could also explore supporting a local arts festival, for example by paying for the performance of a famous Somali band like Dur Dur Band or making a small financial contribution.

## Kenyan Government (North-Eastern Provinces)

*A discussion was held with the Wajir Museum, which falls under the National Museums.*

There seem to be no investments by the Kenyan government in the field of culture in this part of the country. Devolution of government responsibilities and budgets to the county level does not seem to have helped the cultural sector in North-Eastern Kenya. Two informants described how funding had decreased as a result. Presumably, the counties now manage their own cultural budgets; but the money does not seem to be spent, or it is spent on other issues; "county governments have other priorities" one informant said euphemistically.

Encouragingly, the National Museums of Kenya has provided support to local cultural activities, most notably, the Wajir Museum, which is the only national museum in the Somali-inhabited areas of North-East Kenya. It showcases mostly traditional objects of the peoples of Northern Kenya (predominantly Somali objects) but it also has sections on colonial and recent history. The curator Farah Sirat Farah noted that the museum used to host cultural events organised by the county government, but that these no longer take place. However, with the support of the National Museums the Wajir Museum still hosts exhibitions and events, albeit at a reduced pace. There is also good cooperation with (non-national) museums in Garissa, Isiolo and Marsabit and the Wajir Museum has cooperated with the Somali cultural week in Nairobi by sending Somali artists.

Key informants from Garissa, Mandera and Wajir noted that the county governments do have facilities which can be used by artists and youth groups under certain conditions. With these exceptions, county government seems to be, currently, quite disengaged from culture.

*Focus Box 3: Entry Point in Kenyan North-Eastern Provinces*

> **ENTRY POINT**: There are few obvious entry points with the local government in Kenya's North-Eastern provinces, but the Wajir Museum could receive some extra support for its activities. Further exhibitions focussing on Somali culture could be envisaged, along with accompanying educational content and material.

## 6.2. Funders

Here we include three groups: donors, diaspora and local private and commercial sponsoring of culture.

### Donors

There are few donors in the field of culture in Somalia other than SDC and the EU. In Kenya and Ethiopia there are more donors in this field, e.g. the British Council and the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, but in general there is little interest in culture among other donor organisations. In addition, the Somali cultural sector lacks the capacity to interact with donors, in part because funding instruments tend to become ever more complex. However, there may be more opportunities than perceived to engage with decision-makers and budget-holders who have a *personal* interest in culture. Small-action grants are not uncommon among donors, so there could be some 'low hanging fruits' if SDC wishes to leverage co-funding.

### European Union

The EU provides support to Somali culture through two channels: direct funding from the European Commission (EC), and through the EU Delegation in Somalia.

The main objective of EU development cooperation with Somalia is "to rebuild the state, improve security and stability and reduce poverty".[20] The EU aligns itself closely with the Somali National Development Plan 2017-2020. The EU development budget amounts to about 100 million €/year for these objectives, plus a much larger yearly amount in security expenses. Humanitarian support is delivered through ECHO, and there are further contributions to the World Bank-managed Multi-Partner

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[20] EU website accessed on November 2, 2020.

Trust Fund, to the UN system and to UNOCHA's yearly appeals, etc. With a contribution of more than €3.5 billion in the period 2014-2020, the EU is by far the largest donor in Somalia.

The EU delegation, like the Somali federal government, bases its strategy for culture on the UNESCO scoping study of 2013 "*Scoping Study on the Culture Sector in Somalia*". In 2018 the EU Somalia development strategy considered culture a 'fundamental pillar' for reconstituting the Somali social fabric. Stating that the Somali cultural memory is lost, that youth needs culture to form a new national identity, that the cultural sector is destroyed and civil society lacks capacity, the EU recommends building the capacity of the government and that of 'non state actors.' As the EU's main objective is to build the Somali federal state, it cannot interact constructively with Somaliland; but the EU does fund the Hargeysa Cultural Center, the Masaf Art Foundation and other civil society groups in Somaliland. Through a project focusing on Laas Geel rock art site, the Hargeysa Cultural Centre is building the capacity of Somaliland government agents with EU funding.

The current EU head of delegation is a staunch defender of culture and seems personally invested in allowing the young generation to express itself culturally. He recently commissioned the young artist 'Nujoom' to paint a mural in the EU base and oversaw the organisation of a poetry competition in Kismayo. There are clearly chances to secure funding for Somali artists with the EU delegation. Beneficiaries of the EU delegation office's small grants have included individual artists, NGOs, cultural organisations, and public institutions such as the Somali Academy for Sciences and Arts (SOMASA).

The European Commission also funds activities in Somalia directly (from Brussels); for example, the CISP grant 'ArtXChange' used for capacity building and psychosocial work in the cultural sector (to which SDC also contributed) came from the Commission.

## United Nations

The United Nations is present in Somalia through many agencies. Broadly speaking there are three types of UN agencies: political (UNSOM), humanitarian (UNOCHA, WFP, UNHCR) and development (UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNHABITAT, UNESCO).

Culture is most specifically the remit of UNESCO, which is treated in the next section, as it is not a donor. As we shall see, however, UNESCO has very limited regional presence, and none, physically, in Somalia. Of the very considerable funds distributed by the UN in Somalia, only a small percentage goes to culture. This may take the shape of messaging for humanitarian or development goals (as when a local NGO contracts local artist to write and perform a song about how to prevent the spread of Covid-19) but of the few instances of UN-funded cultural projects, most belong to the 'stabilisation' category.

Opportunities to collaborate with these types of programming were not pursued in this study due to the constraints of scope and time.

For example, in 2014 the UN contracted the private consultancy firm, Albany Associates, to set up an 'Information Support Team' to assist the government and AMISOM in their communications endeavours in areas recently retaken from Al Shabaab. Some cultural events were funded through this mechanism, including the first Somali Cultural Festival (2014). Another example: until 2020 the Somali Stabilization Initiative, that focuses on the reintegration of Al Shabaab supporters in Jubaland and the South West State, used art therapy as one of its tools. This US-funded programme was managed by IOM, a UN-agency.

Another funding instrument of the UN is the Peace Building Fund (PBF) which is used for social reconciliation, community strengthening and peacebuilding projects. In the 192-page evaluation report of December 2019, the word culture is only mentioned once, as part of a project led by IOM and UN Habitat and implemented by the federal member state governments in South West State and Jubaland, to support drought-affected populations.

Like the EU, the United Nations cannot deal with the Somaliland government as that of an independent state, but it considers it a regional government. As mentioned above, Somaliland has currently suspended its relations with the UN.

### Other Donors

The Netherlands Embassy expressed interest in collaborating with SDC on this multi-year strategic development programme. The Netherlands Embassy has small-scale funding available; other embassies, European or other, might similarly have such flexible funding instruments, but these are opportunities best pursued through personal/professional connections, rather than formal channels as they are likely to be opportunistic and ad hoc in nature. The Heinrich Böll Stiftung has been cited as a supporter of the Somali cultural week, but no other support to Somali culture or society can be found on the website of their Kenyan office, and it is unclear whether they remain active in the region. Certainly, none of the stakeholders interviewed in the fieldwork mentioned the Heinrich Böll Stiftung when discussing on-going cultural programmes in the area.

In Ethiopia there may be opportunities to collaborate with donors with similar interests, such as SIDA ( which funds Selam Ethiopia) and the British Council (which funds Talent Youth Association).

> **ENTRY POINT:** It would be worthwhile for SDC to explore cooperation with the Netherlands and other small European embassies that are known to dispose of some small funding that can be used for cultural activities. In Ethiopia SDC could engage the British Council and SIDA, two donor organisations which seem to have largely overlapping interests in culture and civil society It may be an attractive proposition that SDC is embarking on a 12-year program, offering a horizon for impact that many other diplomatic donors only dream of. There may be opportunities to collaborate with relevant UN programmes related to stabilisation and peacebuilding. The EU is a natural funding partner for cultural programmes having co-funded projects with SDC in the past.

## Diaspora and Commercial Sponsors

We found little evidence of diaspora funding for the culture sector. According to interviewees, the diaspora tends to invest mainly in business and politics. When asked about funding, few local partners mentioned diaspora support. Other forms of exchange do exist, notably confirmed Somali artists returning to Somalia for short or longer periods to give performances, training, or do artistic research.

*Assessment*: We do not see entry points for SDC in this space, unless some form of mobility grant can be put in place to allow diaspora artists to return to the region for training, research and performances.

**Commercial sponsoring** is still rare. It happens mostly in Hargeisa and Nairobi, and the main sponsors are telecoms and remittances companies. The Corporate Social Responsibility Manager of Dahabshiil, perhaps the prime commercial sponsor in the Somali region, explained that they did not plan to decentralise commercial sponsoring anytime soon, afraid that branch offices would make the wrong choices and generate conflict. This may explain why local groups cannot access commercial funding in Garowe, where very few private businesses have their headquarters (Puntland's business capitals are Bosaso and Galkacyo). In Mogadishu there may be opportunities for commercial sponsorship given the number of businesses headquartered here, but we did not encounter any examples during our fieldwork. Nevertheless, the fact that none of the cultural actors we interviewed spoke about commercial sponsorship suggests this could be a missed opportunity. In Nairobi commercial sponsoring is growing; there also, Dahabshiil was mentioned as a likely sponsor for cultural events by several informants from Eastleigh.

*Assessment*: We do not see entry points for SDC in this space.

## 6.3. Multinational organisations and INGOs

Aleph interviewed a number of active INGO and multilateral organisations currently working in the culture sector in the region. While this is not a comprehensive list of every organisation working in this space, it provides a near-exhaustive description of the most prominent and visible organisations.

### UNESCO

UNESCO has a difficult working relationship with the Somali authorities. There is no UNESCO focal point for Somalia; the previous one was never replaced. The person mostly dealing with Somalia now covers 13 countries as 'Regional Advisor for Culture at UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa'. UNESCO has focused on having the federal government ratify the UN conventions on the preservation of cultural heritage and adopt corresponding national legislation, but has also tried to get involved in other programmes, such as support to the Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts (SOMASA), which conducted heritage mapping in 2018. UNESCO has also tried to establish a much-needed coordination platform for the culture sector (the Friends of Somalia), although this has been beset by sensitivities about political representation from Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland, and difficulties finding a suitable, neutral location for meetings. Recent attempts to revitalise the Friends of Somalia have been blocked by the Federal Government of Somalia who refuse to meet anywhere other than Mogadishu. UNESCO in turn must be extremely cautious about how it engages with official representation from Somaliland and Puntland.

UNESCO has also partnered with smaller cultural organisations, for example with Awjama during the Somali Heritage Week in Nairobi, and with CISP on capacity building of SOMASA; it has explored partnering with the Mogadishu Book Fair, the National Film Agency and the Mogadishu municipality (Benadir Regional Administration) to have Mogadishu apply for the Creative Cities status. UNESCO has also delivered a project in Somalia through the Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF), which funded management and administrative support to the newly rehabilitated National Museum of Mogadishu.[21]

UNESCO's capacity to engage with national authorities has been frustrated by the Somali National UNESCO Commission (established Jan 2019) which has acted as a gatekeeper, insisting all UNESCO's contacts with Somali institutions go through them, rarely resulting, informants report, in any action being taken.  As to Somaliland and Puntland, this obstacle has impeded any meaningful engagement.

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[21] https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-heritage-emergency-fund-supports-revival-somalia-national-museum

ENTRY POINT: Coordination and dialogue with UNESCO is important, regardless of the direction SDC wishes to take its 12-year strategic engagement plan. UNESCO will be instrumental in steering (the often slow) process of legislative and policy reform necessary for the culture sector in the region. We recommend that SDC does not engage directly in these activities as they are often expensive and time-consuming, but UNESCO remains a powerful advocacy ally, and there may be opportunities to support UNESCO in other ways. The 'Friends of Somalia' working group would fill an important coordination gap in the sector. While the group remains in deadlock over political representation, there could be a role for SDC to facilitate discussions (potentially virtually) leveraging its neutral status in close collaboration with UNESCO. The first step is to connect with UNESCO in Nairobi and Addis Ababa to discuss potential modalities.

## Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli, CISP

CISP is an Italian organisation that has run cultural programmes in Mogadishu and Galkacyo. It has received funding from SDC twice. The objectives and values of the organisation seem to align closely with those of SDC. Its programme *Arts for Social Change* supports youth, women, IDPs and minority groups through social and cultural activities. Their programmes seem to have had markedly more impact when supporting activities of the informal cultural sector (e.g. Theatre of the Oppressed, photovoice and body mapping workshops and public arts exhibitions) than those of the formal sector (e.g. capacity building of the Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts or the production of an extracurricular arts education program for primary schools, that was not adopted by the Ministry of Education). They do not pay the cultural performers and remark there is a remarkable vitality and drive among Somali artists to continue without funding. They see SDC funding as useful to foster creative entrepreneurship. Their project manager in Mogadishu, Abdulkadir Mohamed 'Ato' mentors a group of artists ('Fanwadaag') and supports the Theatre of the Oppressed group.

ENTRY POINT: CISP is a strong technical partner for SDC. CISP has a strong track record of delivery and well-trained, experienced and qualified staff in-situ to deliver and oversee projects. They now have facilitators trained in techniques such as photovoice and body mapping. In the field of contemporary art, we found no other organisation with their record or skillset. Funding should focus on events and public workshops as these tend to be the areas which generate the greatest interest and publicity.

## Steve Turner/Barkulan Trust

Steve Turner, active in Somalia media development since 2010, was often mentioned by our informants. He is founder and director of the BarKulan Trust. His main activity is radio development, ranging from setting up local stations to helping write national legislative frameworks. In 2014 he initiated the Somali Cultural Festival in Mogadishu, which was a great success according to a number of stakeholders. He has good relations with the federal and member state governments. A recent activity was the production of a picture and narrative book on Marka, after the idea had been suggested by the local community; the book was made mostly by local photographers, artists, writers and historians and assembled by Mr. Turner; 200 copies were made and distributed locally.

*Focus Box 7: Entry Point with Barkulan Trust*

**ENTRY POINT:** Turner is actively seeking funding to produce similar photography books based on other Somali towns. He is also searching partners for a project to digitise the archives of Radio Mogadishu.

## SOMAAC

Steve Turner has partnered with Abdisalam Aato (see below) and a few other allies to set up a Somali Arts and Culture Network (SOMAAC). This should consist of local or sectoral membership-based groups (for example cultural producers in Kismayo or Somali photographers) who specialise in self-help and information exchange. SOMAAC is to be led by a central network of senior Somali cultural figures. This committee would then be supported by an office set up under the Barkulan Trust, which can manage grants from the international community for artists and producers, especially collaborative ventures. The purpose is to build the cultural rather than the administrative capacity of local organisations. A first plan is to organise photojournalism courses after establishing a network of photographers.

*Focus Box 8: Entry Point with SOMAAC*

**ENTRY POINT**: If the project matures, SOMAAC could be a strong partner to administer micro-grants to small-scale localised cultural initiatives and artists. This fits within the long-term capacity building approach favoured by SDC.

## Rift Valley Institute, RVI

The Rift Valley Institute is a research organisation, but it touches the field of culture in many ways. For one, its director believes that culture is at the heart of development. He sees RVI's task as 'generating, preserving and disseminating knowledge', which is fundamentally a cultural activity, and therefore welcomes a multi-year strategic approach by SDC.

RVI has a close working relationship with the Hargeysa Cultural Centre, which it helped co-establish with EU funding in 2014; it started by supporting some panels at the Hargeysa International Book Fair and now funds research activities through several channels in Hargeisa. This includes oral history research, which RVI organises in several East African countries (although it is not a specific program) and in Puntland. Other informants mentioned oral history as essential for the preservation of historical and cultural knowledge; it also builds bridges between the young researchers and the interviewed elderly people.

RVI is engaged in a more general effort to improve research capabilities in local institutes of higher learning. Partners in Somalia during a 2015-2018 programme funded by the UK Government were the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies at Hargeisa University and the Puntland State University in Garowe. One of the results of this partnership, still ongoing, is the publication of the Somaliland Peace and Development Journal which publishes scholarship from all RVI partners in East Africa & the Sudans.

*Focus Box 9: Entry Point with RVI*

ENTRY POINT: A clear intersection of interest between RVI and SDC is RVI's cross-border research project. Although it does not focus on cultural issues, it could. SDC should start a discussion with the Rift Valley Institute on shared interests and objectives and could fund RVI partners in cultural research. An Oral History programme, as part of a broader cultural mapping exercise, could be a starting point.

## Horn Heritage

Archaeology is a growing sector in Somaliland. Somaliland and Puntland seem to have numerous archaeological sites dating from prehistory onwards. A leading organisation in this field is **Horn Heritage**, led by Dr. Sada Mire who has acquired international fame as an archaeologist, and is now based in the Netherlands. Gradually, some archaeological teams, including those led by Dr. Sada Mire, are venturing into the exploration of Somaliland's archaeological sites. The government plays only a minor role in regulating access and seems largely disinterested in this regard, according to our interviews. Dr. Mire, because of her fame and strong networks, is determined to put Somaliland on the

archaeological map, and has embarked upon a vast digitisation project of Somali cultural heritage. Her foundation is also active in the Somali Region of Ethiopia, where it has engaged with the site of Darbi Balanbale, besides starting to record traditional dances in the countryside..

> ENTRY POINT: Dr. Sada Mire is looking for a long-term support to her Horn Heritage documentation and digitisation effort.

## Selam Ethiopia

Selam Ethiopia is an NGO set up by Selam, an organisation based in Sweden that works on the promotion and development of Ethiopian music. While Selam, through its record label 'Selam Sound' mostly produces contemporary Ethiopian music – including in its studio in Addis Ababa, see [youtube/muzikawi](youtube/muzikawi) for some productions of special regional singers recorded there – Selam Ethiopia works in the broader field of cultural development, including exchange, strengthening the cultural sector and the ability of cultural producers to positively influence social development. In the past three years Selam has developed its presence in Ethiopia's highland regions, and now it is expanding into the Eastern lowlands, opening activities in Jigjiga, Dire Dawa and the Afar region. It has worked intensively with the circus and has identified a good circus partner in Dire Dawa. Selam is also interested in getting involved in the Jigjiga music production scene, hoping to explore and eventually maybe improve production standards.

Selam does not seem to particularly need funds – the organisation seems well-funded by SIDA and other Swedish institutions – but it is eager to cooperate with other actors seeking to promote cultural development in Ethiopia, including in its arid and semi-arid lowlands.

> ENTRY POINT: Several cooperative ventures were suggested, ranging from supporting the travel of the famous Somali 'Dur-Dur Band' from London to Addis (and eventually to Jigjiga and other Somali towns) to supporting the establishment of Selam Ethiopia in Jigjiga (they have funding already, but could use some more, for example to secure rehearsal and recording space in Jigjiga) and working through Selam with the Dire Dawa circus (see below) to facilitate peace-building between youth communities.

### Interpeace, Life and Peace Institute and other mediation organisations

Other organisations that we encountered in Somalia and North East Kenya were Interpeace and the Life and Peace Institute, both of whom engage mostly in community reconciliation and peace-building efforts. They sometimes fund cultural events to bring communities together. Other organisations that have funded cultural events as part of peacebuilding programs are Saferworld or the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. As their interest in culture is very incidental, the consultants did not seek to meet them, but synergies could be explored between such organisations and SDC when SDC funds cultural programs as part of a wider social reconciliation scheme.

**Assessment:** There are no immediate entry points here in the short-term, though potential collaborations could be explored if SDC wishes to pursue an overtly peacebuilding agenda.

### Alliance Française and other cultural platforms in Nairobi and Addis Ababa

The branches of the Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute and local cultural institutes such as Kuona Trust in Nairobi and Addis Ababa, among others, have hosted Somali artists and cultural groups. The Destino Dance Company and Addis Foto Fest are two such organisations funded by SDC Ethiopia which provided a platform to Somalis with international resonance. Performing in such locations empowers Somali artists and exposes them to the rest of the world, while integrating them into the national cultural fabric.

> **ENTRY POINT:** SDC can continue funding Addis Foto Fest, requesting organisers not to overlook Somali culture. One focus could be on Somali photographers such as Guleid (Addis) and Mustafa Saeed (Hargeisa), among others. Besides, there is value in building a relationship with the Alliance Française and the Goethe Institute in order to utilise their facilities in Ethiopia and Kenya, and identify performance opportunities for Somali artists when they merit such exposure.

## 6.4. Artists and Creatives

Aleph conducted interviews with performers and artists in the culture sector to get a flavour of the types of activity being conducted and the opportunities that exist. No effort has been made to map all culture sector actors at this level as to do so would require a larger scope of work. The sample here provides an indication of the range of opportunities and entry points that may exist across the region.

## Kenya North Eastern Provinces

Interviewees in the North Eastern Provinces agreed that there are many young Kenyan Somalis interested in cultural production, notably poetry, drama and stand-up comedy. Traditional music and dance are secondary areas of interest. Contemporary music and visual arts are difficult in the conservative climate and are generally not attempted. Security, in the opinion of local informants, does not impede cultural expression, but social conservatism does.

The groups engaging in poetry, drama and comedy are informal and have low levels of organisational capacity. They receive no funding from either international donors or from the Kenyan government. County governments do not invest in culture, as remarked earlier in the report. A cultural week held in Mandera in 2018, funded by the county, was a notable exception but this event, supposed to be held every year, has not taken place since. The government does however provide ready access to its facilities, so cultural actors do have places to convene.

In Mandera a youth organisation called *Mandera Got Talent* formed in 2018 and has performed since then at national and religious holidays and events like World Environment Day. They do not receive funding, but are eager to engage in public awareness messaging (e.g. drug and substance abuse, CVE, FGM, corruption, social peace and reconciliation). They cooperate with vocational training and employment programmes such as the Humanitarian Agency for Community Progress and Development (HACPAD) and the Women Empowerment and Youth Organization (WEYO). A young activist called Ibrahim Mohamed Ali gives classes in art education to schoolchildren.

As noted above, *Interpeace* funded cultural peacebuilding activities in the county in 2018-19. It works only in Mandera, which is particularly conflict-prone because of clan clashes (Degodia vs Garre) and cross-border infiltration by Al Shabaab. In Garissa the *Life and Peace Institute* funded a body mapping art project (see CISP) with community leaders.

In Wajir a local singer 'Ahmed' is up and coming, combining tradition with modern elements. Wajir also has a community radio that appears eager to broadcast more cultural content. In Garissa, too, there are several youth groups organising song, drama and poetry events on their own initiative, many of them linked to the Garissa Culture and Mediation Centre. In the three counties, informants reported, the youth is severely underemployed and desires more cultural life.

*Focus Box 10: Entry Point with Artists and Creatives in North Eastern Provinces of Kenya*

> **ENTRY POINT:** It would be worthwhile exploring how the youth in the counties of North-Eastern Kenya can be supported in their efforts to perform, both within their communities and in Nairobi, maybe in collaboration with the Wajir Museum (see above under governments). It would be possible

> to integrate SDC messaging concerns (e.g. regional and cross-border integration, food security, migration and health) into the programmes, especially with partners like Mandera Got Talent, who have an established track record in this field.

## Nairobi/Eastleigh

Eastleigh is often called the Somali business capital of East Africa. This neighbourhood beyond the industrial zone of Nairobi is thriving, even during the Covid 19 pandemic. It has a mixed population of Somali refugees, Kenyan Somalis and other Kenyans. Eastleigh was repeatedly targeted by Kenyan security agencies after terrorist attacks and thus got a bad reputation within Kenya, along with Somalis more generally. Many cultural activities in Eastleigh have been developed as a response in order to improve the image of Somalis.

*Eastleighwood* is a Somali youth organisation established to change the image of Somalis in Kenya, through movies, collective action (environment clean-up), events (talent search, exhibitions) and education (art, P&CVE, citizenship). They claim to have a branch in Mogadishu (next to AMISOM) and organise projects in Garissa, Wajir and Mandera. They have laudable intentions and a professional appearance, but may receive substantial P&CVE funding, which may expose them to criticism.

The professionally produced '*Waayaha Cusub*' band grew to fame in Eastleigh, but there is little to suggest it has created a flourishing musical scene in its wake. The facilities available here – e.g. studios, trained cameramen, access to more funding – are the best that Somalis in the Horn of Africa can access, but still not of a remarkable level. There is a potential Somali cultural industry but it has not taken off.

One of the drivers of cultural production is *Star FM* (and online TV network). It is run from Nairobi and more recently also broadcasts from Mogadishu. It has a wide audience among the Kenyan Somali community. Noticeable broadcasts are a Somali puppet show called Hiddo & Hirsi ([youtube link](#)). The presenter of this show and her husband, Abdi Gab, are central figures in the Somali arts community in Nairobi. Abdi Gab used to work in the Somali National Museum in the 1980s, and has many projects, including a book project of 200 objects of Somali culture. His wife, besides being an actress, is a luth (oud) player. The puppet show they have developed could be used for many other outreach and awareness raising purposes. The director of Star FM explained that cultural programmes attract many listeners but not much funding. Somali media are typically paid to run stories, that is their business model, but they do not get paid for cultural content. Nonetheless, Star FM is eager to partner on more cultural programs.

The most oft-mentioned cultural organisation in Eastleigh is the Awjaama Omar Cultural Research and Reading Centre, mostly called the **Awjaama Cultural Centre**. Its flagship program is the Somali Heritage Week which it has organised in Nairobi every year from 2015 onward (except 2020 because of Covid-19) with support by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung and occasionally of UNESCO and other donors. Awjama cooperates with Kenyan institutions such as the National Museums and Mandera County (for the 2018 culture week). It focuses on bringing together Somali refugees, Kenyan Somalis and other Kenyans for sharing their culture, and on providing opportunities for civic and cultural engagement for the youth and women. It has also developed commercial handicraft skills among Somali women, preparing traditional cultural objects that are sold during the Heritage Week. Awjaama also operates in Puntland.

**Thrive Somali Women Refugees Group** ([website](website)) is a small but meaningful initiative to improve the well-being of Somali refugees. The proceeds of commercial trainings organised by Thrive are reinvested in the overall wellbeing of Somali women refugees, through income generation (tie-dye and sewing), nature walks, yoga training, poetry readings and community alert systems for women in danger. In a meeting with a 'Sisterhood Group', they explained that there are no parks and barely any common facilities in Eastleigh for women and children, as the Somali community there is entirely focused on business and money-making. Many women live alone with their children and find it difficult to make a living in an unknown (Kenyan) environment. Culture brings them together, increasing self-help opportunities.

*Focus Box 11: Entry Point with Artists and Creatives in Nairobi/Eastleigh*

ENTRY POINT: Eastleigh is a strategic link in the Somali cultural production sector, as it offers access to the best production facilities and international contacts, piggybacking on the lively Kenyan cultural sector. There is a clear humanitarian need (destitute Somali refugees) and an obvious social objective: reconciling the Somali refugees with the Kenyan host communities, Somali and other. SDC should explore how to invest strategically in cultural activities in this area. Potential entry points here include: continued funding of the Awjaama Cultural Centre, and specifically the Somali Heritage Week; collaboration with Thrive to support Somali refugees, potentially connecting handicraft items to other cultural events supported by SDC; collaboration with Star FM and possibly Eastleighwood to develop creative and engaging educational content promoting Somali culture.

## Mogadishu

Mogadishu ought to be the cultural capital of the Somali people, but it is not. The city is dynamic and its population a vibrant and mostly youthful mix of all kinds of Somalis. However, the cultural scene here is significantly muted compared to Hargeisa, Garowe and Eastleigh. This is because Mogadishu is still an embattled city, contested between Al Shabaab and the government and between many different power groups based on clan, religious affiliation or political parties. In these power struggles there is little space for culture. Nevertheless, we found a strong appetite for cultural activities during our interviews with stakeholders in Mogadishu.

As noted previously, the cultural scene is fragmented, consisting of small groups and scattered activities. This means there are missed opportunities for sharing access to limited resources such as funding, equipment and physical space. On an artistic level, it also misses opportunities for creativity and inspiration.

This is not helped by the lack of public spaces in Mogadishu: there are no parks and no cultural venues (the restored National Theatre is only used for government functions). When groups perform, they do so at restaurants – there are many busy restaurants open until late at night – or at Lido Beach. CISP's partners once invested a ruined building at the busy 'Dabka' intersection for a pop-up exhibition, with the agreement of the City Council.

One mover and shaker often referred to by informants is Abdisalam Aato. He focuses on production, mentoring and training in the field of video, audio and graphic arts. To this end he established the **Arts and Creativity House for Somalia** (ArtCH), which participates in creative projects, such as making movies or recording Somali sounds. ArtCH envisages producing a series of 'vodcasts' (video podcasts) interviewing cultural leaders such as Ahmed Shemali (the 'Brad Pitt' of Somalia who has now become a tailor – he appears briefly in *Mogadisco*). Aato has a broad sectoral overview and is primarily interested in assisting creative pursuits by the youth. ArtCH has been funded from his personal revenue for a year. He is one of the founders of **SOMAAC** (see above).

Another group of cultural actors has formed around the programme manager for **CISP** (see above) who, also from his revenue, hosts two groups which came out of previous CISP activities. One, **Fanwadaag** ('Art Cooperation') is a group of photojournalists, graphic artists, video podcasters, storytellers and poets who share common facilities; the other, **Theatre of the Oppressed**, performs in the same space outside office hours. This social, participative street theatre company established in 2018 consists of eight women and four men; they have continued performing without donor funding, although they

occasionally get paid for performances. Their focus has been on women's emancipation and ending female genital mutilation. Besides Mogadishu, they have also performed in Kismayo.

The Somali capital also hosts most of the country's research institutes, both private and public. Think tanks like the *Heritage Institute for Policy Studies*, *Hiraal Institute* and *Somali Public Agenda* exist alongside more than 30 universities, most of which have weak research capacity (as they focus mostly on the business of providing education and degrees for money). Many of the country's main intellectuals, also from Puntland and Somaliland, gravitate toward Mogadishu for government jobs and influence. Research institutes such as Hiraal provide a favourable setting for such people to meet and broadly discuss cultural affairs.

*Focus Box 12: Entry Point with Artists and Creatives in Mogadishu*

**ENTRY POINT:** In the short term, SDC can provide small-scale financial support to organisations either directly (ArtCH) or indirectly (through CISP). In the medium term, SDC could also seek to strengthen collaboration and resource sharing across the culture scene in Mogadishu. One way to encourage connections between diverse cultural actors could be to issue grants to consortia of organisations rather than just individuals. SDC could also consider co-financing a physical cultural centre with the support of other donors (see also recommendations for policy and advocacy later in the report).

## South and Central Somalia

When discussing art and culture in South and Central Somalia, it is important to recognise that most of this area is either under Al Shabaab control, or penetrated by the militants. Cultural freedom of expression in AS-held areas is virtually non-existent, as in the Salafi view (shared by many non-violent Islamists in Somalia) culture is a pollutant that has affected the purity of Islam. Internet, photography, music and dancing etc. are banned.

Little research has been undertaken to investigate the impact of Al Shabaab on culture, whether positive or negative. Those towns where some cultural activities may take place are practically surrounded by Al Shabaab, and in such places contemporary culture becomes a very insular, as in Beled Weyne, where the field team conducted a short field visit.

*Case Study: Beled Weyne* is a historic town of Somalia, situated in a meander of the Shabelle river about thirty kilometres after it crosses the Ethiopian border. Situated on trade routes between Ethiopia and the Banadir coast, and on the main road linking southern to central and northern Somalia, Beled Weyne (meaning 'large town') enjoys the lasting prosperity of an agricultural production hub located on trade routes. This green town situated among fertile fields has often been praised by poets but today the town's cultural life is practically dead. Al Shabaab occupied the town for a number of years, and since their expulsion in 2015, they have encircled the town, effectively cutting it off from the surrounding country. Very little cultural life is possible within the town, as Al Shabaab allegedly maintains strong networks in many areas. There are no venues, no events, no bookstores and no production facilities; only small-scale private events take place behind closed doors. These include the traditional Somali baranbuur (women beating drums and chanting improvised texts), ka'alsho music and singing, and the warasoqo traditional local dance. Painters and calligraphers do not expect their work to be publicly shown, and while there may be interest in artwork among the public, they are unable to make a living from their work. Artists must go to Mogadishu if they wish to make an income. Informants were keen to point out that this situation was not only due to Al Shabaab's presence, but also to the inherent conservatism of the population.

In the past, some NGOs had apparently focussed on women's vocational training for handicrafts (embroidery, dyeing textiles), which faced little opposition from local community members. However, according to Ugaas Xasan Ugaas Khaliif, (the 'King' of the Hawadle clan which forms the absolute majority in the town), these initiatives were unsuccessful as they failed to find a market for their products, and women struggled to gain market access.

Young people (even artists) in Beled Weyne seem uninterested in reviving a cultural life in town. The Ugaas recognised the importance of culture but still found it a secondary priority compared to other social and development needs. He echoed young people in saying sport activities have priority over cultural events. People are waiting for peace first, then good governance. For the moment at least, we do not see many opportunities for supporting cultural activities in places like Beled Weyne, especially with the limited budget available to cultural programming.

The situation in many towns of South and Central Somalia seems similar to that described above: between the skeleton presence of Al Shabaab and prevalent social conservatism, and in a context of economic crisis, unemployment and chronic insecurity, there is little public interest in art and culture. Only Kismayo and Baidoa seem to have a sufficient size to allow a cultural life to surface. There may be

places such as Marka and Baraawe and Kismayo, historic port cities, where the balance between social conservatism and cultural awareness is tipped more toward the latter.

Most of the artistic activities funded by donors fall under Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P&CVE) projects. These include:

- The setting up of community radios in places such as Baraawe, Marka, Baidoa, Afmadow, Xudur, which creates opportunities to broadcast cultural content;
- Arts and culture as part of a UN PBF supported project called Midnimo in several districts;
- Psychosocial healing through community theatre in Jubaland and South West State, organised by IOM with an Armenian theatre director.

Mostly NGOs are discrete about funding they receive for P&CVE objectives, as it makes them into a target of Al Shabaab. Outside of P&CVE, several international NGOs specialize in social reconciliation and peacebuilding. They also use culture as a peacebuilding tool. Such organisations (*Life and Peace Institute, Saferworld*, *Humanitarian Dialogue* and others) keep a low profile and do not advertise their work.

Other cultural projects that have taken place are a poetry contest in Kismayo organised by the EU delegation office, while Steve Turner funded the creation of a book celebrating the art and culture of Marka, consisting of contributions (photos, texts, art, history) by the town's inhabitants, as noted previously. In Kismayo *Aqil Arts* was mentioned by several key informants as a capable and active group of mostly senior artists.

*Focus Box 13: Entry Points with Artists and Creatives in South and Central Somalia*

ENTRY POINT: in South Central Somalia SDC could support the creation of cultural productions for radio and support books celebrating local culture; it may explore contributing to cultural activities of social reconciliation processes, through NGOs such as the Life and Peace Institute, Saferworld and Humanitarian Dialogue. Given their strong on-ground presence, these organisations are also useful for region-wide research and mapping activities that SDC might want to undertake later.

## Puntland

Puntland provides a marked contrast with the rest of federal Somalia; Al Shabaab has only a limited presence, and despite occasional conflicts along the borders with Galmudug and Somaliland, and terrorist attacks in Galkacyo and Bosaso, the region has been stable since the mid-1990s. This has allowed a higher degree of education, governance and culture to emerge. Traditionally, Puntland's population is more conservative than that of Southern Somalia and even today public music and

dancing is not authorised in any of Puntland's cities (Galkacyo and Bosaso being even more conservative than Garowe). Youth informants explained that they would leave Garowe to enjoy music and dance in gardens outside town.

As a result of disagreements with the federal government, Puntland has maintained its autonomy, functioning like a 'de facto' state. When the federal government announced that the 2020-2021 Parliamentary and Presidential elections would *not* be based on universal suffrage, Puntland decided to hold its 2021 district council elections on the basis of One Person-One Vote. This has energised youth and cultural activists, eager to end the domination of politics by traditional clan elders; many of the informants we spoke to were planning to engage in awareness raising and other elections-related activities. The Chairman and senior advisor of the **Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission** (TPEC) welcomes any support to use culture to facilitate the transition to a modern political system.

Some informants expressed the desire for renewal in the field of culture, too. "It is time to rid Somali culture of camels and spears" said Faduumo, the representative of **Awjaama Cultural Centre** in Garowe. This branch of Awjaama had to close for lack of funding but Faduumo maintains an active role, notably supporting activities geared toward the emancipation of women and youth. She works with the **Somali Dance Academy**, a young but successful group of traditional dancers (sixteen women, nine men). Director Zekeria trained with Hiddo academy in Hargeisa and is now training his troupe to learn different dances from all over Somalia. This group is linked to the **Mahuraan Band**, which seems to be Puntland's main contemporary music (pop) act.

The young directors of the **Puntland Youth Association Network** (PYAN) are invested in both political and cultural renewal. This umbrella organisation of Puntland youth groups claims to have 84 member organisations, many of whom have cultural interests and activities. Their regret that Garowe does not have a central cultural venue was shared by informants at the Ministry of Information, Telecommunications, Heritage, Culture and Tourism and at TPEC. Such a venue could be used to organise a 'Puntland Got Talent' show, which was being prepared in 2019 but was now interrupted because of Covid-19. PYAN also organises workshops and meetings between traditional elders and the youth, for information sharing and closing the generation gap.

The concern with the generation gap was echoed by Ali Farax, the director of the **Puntland Development Research Council**, PDRC. This organisation has received funding from SDC before, recently for a project to create peace collectives with participants from both sides of the contested borders with Galmudug and Somaliland. In such dialogue efforts culture plays a major role, bringing together people divided by politics. PDRC had obtained positive results with *a mobile cinema unit* that travels to areas wracked by

conflict to hold film-based discussions. In terms of bridging the gap between the elderly and youth, PDRC is contemplating a project called 'Oral Historiography for Peacebuilding'.

Garowe also had its ***book fair*** from 2016 to 2019, but its future is uncertain.

*Focus Box 14: Entry Point with Artists and Creatives in Puntland*

ENTRY POINT: There are a number of entry points in Puntland. SDC can continue its support to democratisation in Puntland by funding cultural events, for example through PYAN, with the supervision of the PDRC. Given the reputation of Awjaama and the character and network of their representative, it would be worthwhile to support the reopening of that office, especially if they can provide a temporary venue for artistic activities of other groups and coming editions of the Book Fair.

## Somaliland

Somaliland has the highest level of cultural production in the Somali-speaking region, and Hargeisa's cultural sector is more structured than elsewhere. For example, one finds art education, venues and events, media eager to produce or broadcast art, museums and collections and cultural research activities. Although the market where cultural supply meets demand is still incipient, there seems to be a growing public appreciation of art. The lack of government planning and funding means that most cultural projects are delivered through local NGOs. The capacity level of many of these NGOs is quite high but the sustainability of such initiatives is doubtful.

Somaliland has been peaceful and stable for decades, which has allowed this cultural development. Informants were concerned, however, that the economy is stagnating while the political situation is not hopeful. The current regime shows more tendency toward authoritarian rule, curtailing freedom of expression. Salafi ideology has been slowly gaining ground, also in the political sphere, but many educated youngsters want a modern society with its opportunities and entertainment, creating a growing rift in society. With high education levels but few employment opportunities, Somaliland's young residents leave to seek their luck elsewhere – overseas or in Mogadishu, mostly.

These developments impact Somaliland's towns differently. Informants in Burco, the second city of Somaliland with about 300,000 inhabitants, where youth employment is particularly high, estimate that 75% of the youth follows a Salafi ideology. Self-appointed guardians of virtue close venues where women and men mix, and most organisations no longer dare hold concerts or dances. Two large CSOs in Burco, ***SOYVO*** and ***SOYDAVO***, continue to organise cultural events for the other 25% but are

increasingly careful. Two diaspora returnees are setting up a **Burco Technology and Innovation Hub** for the young people in town, hoping to host start-ups and create jobs.

There seem to be cultural groups, mostly composed of young people, in other towns of Somaliland – e.g. Borama, Berbera, Buuhoodle, Ceerigaabo, Laas Caanood. Activities range from reading and debating clubs to organising poetry readings and music performances. Local authorities may assist in the organisation of a book fair (see below) and other events, but generally the initiative comes from civil society groups. Only in Berbera do the local authorities seem committed to the establishment of a cultural sector. Berbera receives some support from the UAE-based Dubai Ports World which operates the port, and it receives part of the port income directly. This makes it one of the richest municipalities in Somaliland. Berbera also has an active civil society with a modern, pragmatic outlook – for example the **Berbera Economic Forum**. In 2017 a **public library,** entirely funded by the local community was inaugurated, and now the municipality has started restoring a grand English colonial building to host a **museum**. It is still waiting for UN Habitat to start implementing an EU-funded project for urban regeneration, with which it is expected part of the old Ottoman town may be preserved.

In Hargeisa, the most famous cultural organisation is the **Hargeysa Cultural Center**, which has a compound with performance hall, library, exhibition space and several offices with production facilities. It evolved out of the Red Sea Cultural Foundation, which organises the annual Hargeysa Book Fair. Its major donor is the European Union, but many other donors have taken an interest in the organisation and funded part of its activities – including SDC. The Hargeysa Cultural Center organises discussions, presentations, events, research, exhibitions and development work. It has secured an EU grant to organise the preservation of Laas Geel rock art site; it trains government employees in cultural preservation, because the EU cannot give grants directly to Somaliland's authorities.

The **Hargeysa Book Fair** was set up in 2008 and has been held every year since (except in 2020, because of Covid-19). It has spawned book fairs all over the Horn of Africa: Jigjiga, Djibouti, Borama, Berbera, Burco, Laas Caanood, Garowe, Mogadishu and Kismayo. These are organised by local readers' clubs, mostly, who coordinate dates among themselves. Only in Mogadishu does the book fair (with USAID funding) seem to be organised without coordination with Hargeisa. Despite the name, the event is not solely or even primarily about books, but has become a cultural festival with music, dances, debates, poetry readings and other events. It is held annually in July.

Anther cultural centre is the recently established **Masaf Art Foundation** in the Red Sea (Bada Cas) neighbourhood. In normal times it holds public events such as music and poetry and provides vocational training in handicrafts design to women. There are also plans to provide music classes (but they still need the instruments). They claim to be self-funded through membership fees and course fees, but

they have also received an EU delegation grant, together with the Burco-based youth group **SOYDAVO** and **Media Ink**, in order to promote the political participation of women and children; they have deployed a mobile theatre group to that purpose.

**SOCSA**, the Somaliland Culture and Sport Association, was set up by a famous female basketball champion from Siad Barre's era. She established the centre, with a big basketball court in the middle and classrooms around the court, in 2000, but has increasing difficulties finding funding, because, she says, NGOs have been forced by the government to fund government priorities and the women's sport sector is not big enough. She mentioned that social attitudes toward girls' sport were changing, as health is becoming an increasing priority of people. SOCSA had to cancel dancing classes because the girls were no longer interested in the traditional music-less dance (accompanied by chanting and clapping hands) but wanted to dance on music, which is socially problematic. SOCSA has a collection of old Somali handicrafts of museum quality and has provided handicrafts training to women, but they are discouraged by the lack of a market for such objects. She plans to transfer her collection to the new Somaliland national museum. Meanwhile, the shop **Asli Mills**, which specialises in local culture – herbal remedies, local production of essential oils and perfumes, antique objects –roams the countryside in search of traditional craft because they cannot find any quality production in Hargeisa.

There is an appetite for modern dancing among many young people, and there appear to be a handful of places where dancing is hosted on Thursday evenings (until midnight) without being bothered by the religious leaders. The **Hiddo Dhawr** cultural centre has long been the prime place for cultural performances and it continues to provide a traditional cultural setting for both classic and modern Somali performances. Two of the most famous dance groups in Somaliland are the **Hiddo Academy for Traditional Dance** and **Halkar Music and Dance Troupe**. It appears they have sufficient work performing at mostly private events

The market for arts and culture continues to expand steadily, assisted by the return of diaspora Somalilanders. Although most home decoration is produced by Yemeni refugee interior builders, there is also a small, but growing demand for art and cultural objects to decorate homes. **Amal Arts** and **Laleys** are two places where people can buy objects produced by modern Somali designers; the owner of Amal Arts is an art painter herself. Photography printing for home decoration is a potential market. The publisher of **Somaliland Review**, a glossy magazine, believed that a section of her magazine devoted to Somaliland home design, showcasing the integration of traditional Somali handicrafts into modern interiors, could be a success. Besides diaspora, she believed there is a rapidly growing elite of rich people in the capital who can, with a bit of nudging, be convinced to consume more local culture.

*Dahabshiil* is probably the biggest company based in Hargeisa, with hundreds of branches worldwide. The company's Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, who also takes decisions on sponsoring cultural events, explained that culture is a potentially very attractive tool to sway customers, but also a potentially conflictive one. In Hargeisa and Nairobi Dahabshiil feels comfortable supporting contemporary cultural expressions, but less so in the rest of the Somali region. Hargeisa is the only place where commercial sponsoring of cultural events is frequent.

Media play an important role in cultural dissemination, but few media programmes are devoted to culture. One informant remarked that whereas previously Somali poets were the most sought-after media personalities, "politicians are the new rockstars". The director of a large media development organisation, *Media Ink,* which produces content for 45 FM and 12 TV stations throughout Somalia and Somaliland, and is actively involved in policy, training and capacity building, reflected that culture had become a somewhat staid concept; it has to be revitalised and made more attractive, for example through 'Got Talent' shows tailored to the local context. Some cultural awareness training for journalists might also help. Governments, he said, restrain cultural diversity for the sake of national unity while it is precisely this diversity that makes culture interesting for local audiences. Media Ink is intent on securing funding for the digitization of *Radio Hargeisa archives*, which go back to the 1950s.

Among the top tier of Somaliland's society attitudes toward art are changing, and parents appreciate art education for their children. This allows a small-scale education centre like the *Banfas School of Art* to offer art classes to children; art as an extracurricular school activity is almost never offered by schools. Situated in a middle to higher class neighbourhood, the school was founded only in 2019 and has trained 50 students in dance, drawing, painting and photography. It is self-funded. But overall, art and handicraft production is relegated to the domain of the Gabooye, a minority which is now attempting to claim a new positive identity as the original Somali artists. They are also involved in one of the archaeological projects described below.

*Focus Box 15: Entry Point with Artists and Creatives in Somaliland*

ENTRY POINT:  Some of the activities mentioned here align closely to SDC's objectives, such as girls' education and women empowerment through sport, culture and revenue generation.

SOCSA requires funding in order to continue delivering sport, dance and cultural activities for women.

In general, the cultural scene in Somaliland seems quite ripe but some essential connections are missing; for example between handicraft production and the market. An obvious entry point here

could be to work with organisations like Asli Mills to develop vocational training programmes that deliver work of sufficient quality to sell through their physical and online stores.

Funding the Book Fair in Hargeisa, and others like it, are also obvious entry points as they generate significant interest from local communities and can help to overturn negative stereotypes about Somali culture, even among Somalis themselves.

Given the comparative security in Somaliland, there are also opportunities here to support projects and organisations outside of the capital, in places like Borama, Berbera and Burco. Working in these areas would extend SDC's programme reach beyond its traditional focus in larger urban areas.

## Ethiopia Somali Region, Harar and Dire Dawa

Fieldwork was conducted in Jigjiga, Dire Dawa and Harar only. Historically, Ethiopia has pursued a strong socialist agenda, leaving little room for civil society to grow. Faced with wider development challenges, humanitarian crises and conflict, cultural programming has rarely been a priority for successive governments. As a result, there are very few cultural groups working in the Ethiopian arid and semi-arid lowlands.

There is no lack of artists and people interested in culture, but the level of organisation is minimal, making support by an external development partner extremely challenging. For external investments to take place, socio-cultural life first needs to be developed in terms of civil society organisation. A partner such as the *Talent Youth Association*, which is already present in all other areas of Ethiopia with largely British-Council funded civil society and cultural development work and which is eager to start in Jigjiga too, could be an invaluable partner over the medium term. Such an organisation could create platforms for collaboration, share resources, and support efforts by local artist groups to secure external support, funding and collaborative ventures.

Two existing civil society organisations that could be worked with immediately are *Culture and Unity youth group* and the *Dire Dawa Circus* through *Selam Sound.* The Jigjiga-based youth group consists of 10 male and female actors. Registered as a cinema group since 2018, and drawing its main livelihood from making videos for donors on subjects such as illegal migration, they also perform in Jigjiga and its vicinity showing old films and providing entertainment and training. They promote cultural heritage (dresses, poetry, dances) and organise games for the youth. They seek funding to reach more distant areas of the Ethiopian Somali region and Oromia, and to develop new activities. As to the circus group in Dire Dawa, it is starting to receive support from Selam Sound, which has supported such circus groups

in other areas of Ethiopia. SDC could explore funding this circus group for conflict resolution purposes through cultural collaborations between young Somalis and Oromos in and around the town.

*Focus Box 16: Entry Point with Artists and Creatives in the Ethiopian Somali Region*

**ENTRY POINT**: An entry point involving collaboration between the local government CTO, the university, an INGO such as Horn Heritage and a local youth group was mentioned above (section 4.1 Ethiopian government).

Talent Youth Association (tayaeth.org) is eager to start operating in the Ethiopian Somali Region and could prove a good long-term cultural development partner for SDC. Until such an association builds the capacity or solidarity of the independent culture sector actors in the region, only the Culture and Unity youth group and the Dire Dawa circus groups were identified as organisations that have implementation capacity, although SDC may need a partner (such as Selam Sound) to manage grants made to such organisations.

# 7. ANNEX 3: CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE RPHOA

Below is a snapshot of some of the more prominent cultural activities taking place in the region. This is not an exhaustive list

## 7.1. Sectoral dynamics

**Poetry** is not always the benign pastime Westerners may imagine it to be; in the beginning of the civil war (1991-93) some poets and singers fanned the flames of clan conflict. Warmongering poetry has strong roots in Somali history; Sayyid Hassan, the leader of the Dervish revolt (1899-1920) which was primarily an internecine conflict, is considered one of the main national poets.[22] As elsewhere, however, most poets and singers preach peace and reconciliation. But in these times of relative peace, poetry and the performing arts are often used as forms of political and social satire, pillorying corruption, injustice and inequality. One of the reasons why poetry and comedy are so appreciated among Somalis is because they address the gap left by a non-existent public debate.

There is a nascent **literature** scene in the region. It came as somewhat of a surprise that so many informants mentioned they were writing, or planning to write, fiction. Despite the international fame of Nuruddin Farah, fiction writing has not been a prominent feature of the Somali literary tradition. This seems to be changing. The popularity of book fairs and the ease with which writings can be disseminated online may contribute to this trend. Book publishing however seems only an option for the richest authors.

**Drama and comedy** are popular among Somalis. Most informants see this as a consequence of the strong oral culture, while the social media multiplier effect encourages youth who hope to become 'social influencers'. Stand-up comedy and the mix of performative arts displayed during 'Got Talent' TV shows are particularly popular today. Informants in almost every location we visited – and North East Kenya most of all – hoped to organise a 'Mandera/Mogadishu/Kismayo/Garowe/Hargeisa Got Talent' show. Theatre, mostly of the socially engaged kind, is not widely practiced but there were groups operating in all regions we visited, often working on donor-driven programmes but sometimes autonomously; audiences generally welcome these performances with enthusiasm.

**Traditional Somali music** is still going strong but informants everywhere mentioned that very little skills transfer was happening and there are no music schools; so traditional music performers are generally over 50 and studied music and started performing during Siad Barre's time. According to informants,

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[22] See Lidwien Kapteijns 'Clan Cleansing in Somalia' where she quotes from the poetry of the early 1990s, turning communities against each other. As to the Dervish leader, the scholar David Laitin mentions the "derisive clan sentiments pervading the verses of the doyen of Somali invective, the Sayyid Maxamad Cabdille Xasan".

the best musicians are to be found in Somaliland, due, they said to a more peaceful environment for the last three decades and a stronger tradition of music. Famous musicians have an itinerant lifestyle, traveling between their residences abroad, Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia. Sponsors (often politicians or businessmen) are willing to pay many thousands of dollars, sometimes tens of thousands, for a performance.

**Traditional dance** often accompanies musical performances. There is no contemporary dance, although dance styles are evolving. There are many different traditional dance forms across the region. We encountered members of dance groups in Jigjiga, Garowe and Hargeisa – in the capital of Somaliland there are several famous dance groups – able to earn a livelihood from their art. In these regions the practice of dance is widespread. While traditional dancing is popular in the rest of Somalia and in North East Kenya it is prohibited by Al Shabaab or other conservative religious forces. Indeed, with the exception of the Ethiopian Somali region, the growing influence of Salafi Islam is limiting music and dance performances.

The **contemporary Somali music scene** seems diminished since the vibrant decades of the 70s and 80s (as captured on the record *Mogadisco*), although it lives on in the performances of the UK-based Dur-Dur band. The current capital of Somali music production is Hargeisa, followed closely by Jigjiga. In the rest of Somalia contemporary music production is close to zero, including in Nairobi. A Nairobi-based Somali group called 'Waayaha Cusub' rose to prominence in the early 2010s, especially after organizing and starring in Mogadishu's first music festival, in 2013. But after producing an anti-Al Shabaab song (as part of a US-funded P/CVE programme) most group members obtained asylum abroad, where they continue to produce music and perform.[23].

Somali pop music today is mostly influenced by the Ethiopian Somali 'Dhaanto' style, which rode to success during Abdi Iley's presidency of the Somali region. Although based on traditional Somali music and singing, Dhaanto incorporates modern sounds (see here for an example). Other contemporary music influences heard widely are afro-beat, rap, reggae and hip-hop. At the time of conducting fieldwork, the new rage was *Sharma Boy*. Informants were surprised by his meteoric rise (he has more followers than President Farmajo on social media) and felt that, although his musical skills may be unimpressive, at least his music and videos are produced in Mogadishu (see here for a sample).

Sharma Boy's lyrics, which are critical of current society and politics, stir many young people. A song about youth unemployment prompted the Minister of Education Godah Barre to meet him.  But his

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[23] As they were touring in Europe the Kenyan government revoked their visas, not allowing them to return to Kenya, according to the band's Wikipedia page.

music is also appreciated because it provides a Somali response to the highly popular Afro-Beat style that dominates most continental entertainment channels. This is fusion rather than evolution. An example from neighbouring Ethiopia is Jano Band; although it is a group of Addis-based, non-Somali musicians, they have included some songs sung in Somali in their repertoire (Hamza)

The production quality of music audio and video from Jigjiga and Hargeisa is generally very poor. Only Somali music produced abroad (such as that of the Ethiopian Somali *Aar Maanta*) is of better quality. There is a clear case for improving the quality of Somali music production; audio first, but also video.

**Painting and graphic and visual arts** are generally not highly regarded in Somali culture according to key informants interviewed during the fieldwork. Nevertheless, several informants, especially those working in media, expressed that there was a need and a market for better commercial photography – from photo-reporting to advertising. We heard of several young female Somali photographers, who face many obstacles to their work but are nevertheless successful. The same is true for digital graphic arts – a commercial market seems to be there but it has somehow not yet connected with the practitioners. Painters and graphic artists derive most of their income from painting shop facades and public buildings, or the rare order placed by businesspeople or officials. Painting is also used, sometimes, by NGOs for therapeutic objectives. There is little art painting, and most of it is by diaspora returnees.

**Handicrafts** are slowly being rescued from oblivion by a few organisations and individuals intent on safeguarding them. Museums such as the Wajir Museum in Kenya or the Saryan Museum in Hargeisa vaunt the nomadic production of tapestries, jugs and utensils. Vocational training programmes offer opportunities for embroidery and other textile works and could be employed for woodworking, leathercraft, tinnery and other crafts. Consumer demand for handicrafts is extremely muted, and handicraft items command low market value. The return of diaspora Somalis and a resurgence in Somali pride is however slowly changing these attitudes towards craftmanship. Market development depends on further penetrating the upper reaches of the domestic market – for example, making home construction or decoration with Somali traditional objects fashionable – and on a solid programme of skills transfers, from the few elderly who still practice these crafts to young people seeking employment.

The Somali region's **archaeology** is poorly researched and heavily underfunded. While Somali culture has been traditionally nomadic, the landscape is rich with monuments and archaeological sites, most of which remain undiscovered, or partially known from visible clues. Dr. Sada Mire is pioneering research into Somali archaeology, leading perhaps the only local team to excavate and explore built heritage in the region. However, as told by interviewees for this study, Somalis seem to have little

interest in their distant past. Looting from archaeological sites in Somaliland demonstrates some demand for antiquities on the international market, but is also symptomatic of opportunistic income generation. The sale of artefacts by government officials entrusted to protect them is not unheard of. This bleeding of the country's ancient heritage in a climate of political indifference was vividly resented by some informants. Somali antiquities are generally less well-known than artefacts from more popular or well-known cultural traditions (such as Axumite, Yemenite or carvings from Benin), yet there is clearly sufficient demand to encourage illicit trade. Partly as a result of this, museum collections in the region are almost entirely bereft of ancient and historical artefacts.

Some *conservation* work is underway, though the need far outstrips the availability of funding or the availability of trained personnel to conduct such work.  There are architectural ensembles like the Mogadishu seafront, the old town of Marka, the Ottoman town of Berbera and the complex of forts and other early 20<sup>th</sup> century structures in Taleex; there are also isolated forts, aqueducts, bridges, old cisterns and wells and the like dotted around the Somali countryside. However, nothing is done to preserve them, as several of our informants bemoaned. A conservation effort seems underway in Mogadishu and Berbera but it is still in the planning phase. Local authorities are best placed to intervene on their built heritage; Berbera notably has made some efforts to preserve some of its older buildings, and the Ministry dealing with cultural heritage in Puntland seemed eager to start some conservation work, for example in the town of Eyl which has an impressive 19<sup>th</sup> century fort and touristic potential.

**Radio** is a popular means of broadcast in South Central Somalia and in Kenya; many new radio stations are being set up throughout South and Central Somalia as part of an anti-AS strategy and they either produce or are eager to broadcast cultural content. In general radio (FM, AM and SW) is highly regulated in Somalia; in Somaliland there is only one government transmitter: Radio Hargeisa. In Puntland and the Ethiopian Somali and Oromiyya region private FM stations exist, but they seem to be tightly controlled by government, which is not an issue for the dissemination of traditional and 'highbrow' culture but limits their attractiveness for and impact upon the youth.

As to **television**, key informants report that it is gaining in popularity vis-à-vis radio in urban areas but it is even under tighter government control and is mostly used to disseminate government public messaging.

**Social media** is the main platform for dissemination of arts and culture. Websites remain popular but they mainly distribute their content through social media. In Somaliland and Puntland Facebook seems particularly popular, in Mogadishu Twitter. Tiktok is also extremely popular. Whatsapp is the primary method of group communication and is often mentioned as reinforcing clan politics: each lineage has its Whatsapp group resulting in different media feeds, often within the same family as women remain

connected to their father's lineage. Social media works both ways, reinforcing divisions and connecting to the rest of the world.

**Private events** entertainment provides a market for performing artists such as musicians, dancers and poets, across the region. Musicians, dancers and poets earn income with events such as weddings, national days and other celebrations. Hundreds of dollars are a minimum, tens of thousands of dollars for an event are not rare. Visual artists, by contrast, earn a meagre income with photography, painting and graphic work for advertisement and more rarely home decoration. A professional artist from the diaspora noted that asking $200 for a large painting in Hargeisa provoked derision among potential buyers, who found that $50 was enough.

# 8. ANNEX 4: LITERATURE REVIEW

## About this Document

This document contains an interim summary of literature reviewed as part of our support to a wider culture sector evaluation taking place in the RPHoA on behalf of SDC. Ideas presented in this document are presented with caution, as the majority of our fieldwork and analysis have yet to take place.

## Purpose and Scope

The objective of this paper is:

- To summarise SDC's culture portfolio in the RPHoA to date;
- To identify lessons learned from these experiences;
- To identify national policy frameworks for culture in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland;
- To identify areas of strategic alignment between these frameworks and SDC's own culture priorities and programme approaches.

We begin, therefore, with a summary of SDC's regional work in the culture sector before looking at the wider national policy frameworks in which they operate. It is out of necessity descriptive rather than analytical. This brief report does not constitute a full synopsis of our reading, which we intend to continue throughout the fieldwork and reporting stages. In provides instead a summary of our reading to date, highlighting key questions and considerations for our interviews and subsequent analysis. It also serves as a helpful discussion prompt with SDC colleagues, provoking further conversations and ideas, and helping to identify further avenues for enquiry.

## Background

***SDC has a clear and well-articulated cultural agenda.*** SDC's reflection paper *On Culture and Development* provides a broad justification for cultural programming, and how it contributes to wider social and economic gains. It states: 'the idea that developing countries should not invest in culture until their other needs have been met is out of date and condescending'.[24] The *Culture and Development Policy* distils the importance of culture for development into six domains. Specifically, it notes that an independent, diverse and inclusive culture sector advances the following objectives:

| | |
|---|---|
| Strengthening the role of civil society | Preventing violence and conflict |
| Protecting freedom of expression | Promoting discovery and access to new ideas |
| Encouraging inclusion and social cohesion | Instilling dignity, meaning and a sense of beauty, inspiring hope and confidence |

As highlighted in the review above, these are areas that resonate strongly with national policies in each of the countries in the RPHoA.

**The SDC's *Culture and Development Policy* further outlines the types of programme typically supported by the organisation.**

- *The SDC gives priority to support for civil society activities*: this may include advocacy work, dialogue and cooperation with public authorities and institutions for improving policy.
- *The SDC gives preference to capacity building rather the infrastructure development.* In some cases it may contribute to the funding of infrastructure or to the preservation and rehabilitation of tangible cultural heritage.

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[24] SDC (2020a), p.32

- *The SDC encourages cultural diversity, diversity of opinion and dialogue.* The SDC promotes cultural and artistic activities that create space for dialogue. The SDC continually seeks opportunities for dissemination.
- *The SDC promotes equal and decentralised access to cultural life.* The SDC promotes access to remote and/or disadvantaged communities. The SDC seeks to encourage centre-periphery exchanges, as well as intergenerational exchanges.
- *The SDC assists culture professionals in connecting with local markets.*

*SDC's strategic ambitions for culture are reflected by a strong commitment to supporting cultural heritage programmes around the world.* Globally, SDC commits to making one percent of its budget available or cultural programmes. Support to culture typically falls into three categories: i) small actions (ad hoc projects), ii) programmes at country level over several years, and iii) regional programmes. Historically, SDC's cultural programmes globally have been largely urban based (70%), with an increasing focus on music, visual arts and cinema.[25]

Below, we review existing project documentation available on the SDC Sharepoint platform. These projects provide a helpful frame of reference for understanding the types of activity SDC has typically supported, and for identifying potential lessons for future programming.

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[25] SDC (2018b), p,1

*Table 2: Summary of SDC Projects in the RPHoA*

| | Name of Project | Funding Partners | Project Location | Objectives | Key Activities | Implementing Partners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ethiopia** [26] | Development of the Music Sector in Ethiopia | NONE | Ethiopia | To map the music sector in Ethiopia | 30 days' fieldwork in Addis Ababa - key informant interviews/meetings and musical performance. | Malcolm Braff |
| **Kenya** | Somali Heritage Week * | Heinrich Boell Foundation, Rift Valley Institute | Kenya | Funded as part of SDC's Culture Credit project. Aims to counter negative stereotypes about Somali culture. A four-day annual cultural festival. | Training for young people, performing arts, poetry performances, panel discussions, exhibitions and a book fair. | Awjama Omar: Cultural Research and Reading Centre |
| | Colour in Faith | NONE | Kenya | Encourage pluralism and inter-faith respect/dialogue | Community integration workshops, engaging with the media, collective painting of six religious sites, hold gallery event, create community engagement toolkit. | In Commons |
| | Who I Am, Who We Are | NONE | Kenya | To create spaces and conversations for personal reflection on the themes of citizenry, civic responsibility, race, belonging, ethnicism and nationalism | Exhibition at the National Museum of Kenya | Kuona Trust |
| **Somalia** | Somalia ArtFest | ? | Puntland | A festival to promote 'holistic healing' and fostering creative thinking. | Workshops for photographers, filmmakers and visual artists | Somalia Dryland Solutions |

[26] We are awaiting further project documents from the SDC Ethiopia team. As of 9th October, programme literature has not been added to the Sharepoint

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Art for Inclusion | EU, UNESCO, DFID | Somalia | To engage IDPs and host communities in a process of challenging assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices;<br><br>To create a conducive environment for dialogue and inclusion.<br><br>To raise awareness on IDPs (with special focus on women, youth and minorities) conditions of exclusion and make their voices heard. | Public art projects; participatory workshops, training of trainers workshops; exhibition;<br><br>Capacity building of Somalia Academy of Science and Arts (SOMASA) | CISP |
| | Support to Hargeysa Book Fair and Hargeysa Cultural Centre | None | Somaliland | To promote freedom of expression and democratic values through constructive dialogue.<br>To provide a platform to discuss youth and gender issues without censorship, to challenge gender inequality rooted in culture, and to empower women and youth.<br>To enhance the capacity of young women and men to succeed as writers, journalists, filmmakers and photographers. | Established podcast station; Established a recording studio; Train Somali youths on oral history techniques; Events/workshops linked to the HIBF; Organizing cultural events; Book launches; Exhibitions at the gallery; Support to culture centre library | Hargeysa Cultural Centre |
| | Two Museums in Dialogue | NONE | Somaliland and Somalia | To support the conception of the two museums in dialogue project;<br>To establish sound local partnerships;<br>To identify solid funding bodies. | Devise the first preparatory basis for realisation, kick-off funding analysis, searches, planning, networking, first presentations | Joint Venture International AG |

| | Culture Credit | EU, Heinrich Boell Foundation, German Embassy, World Vision, Amal Express | Ethiopia, Somalia, Somaliland , Kenya | To identify, test and establish relationships with potential partners in the field of culture; To deepen already existing first collaborations with partners on cultural initiatives; To explore synergies between culture and SDC sectors of interventions; To position SDC as a key partner in the field of culture and development. | Funded 6 different projects, including visual street art, dance, supporting the Somali Heritage Week, supporting online poetry, supporting musical exchange. | AYAANA Publishing PLC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## Observations

*To date, cultural projects in the RPHoA have tended to fall into three categories – small scale, ad hoc and largely urban based.* It is difficult to judge the effectiveness of SDC's cultural programmes in the RPHoA without reference to impact studies and evaluations, however an internal survey of SDC programme teams conducted in 2018 found that there are a number of questions surrounding the sustainability of small action grants.[27]

*In this context, SDC's Culture Credit project stands out as a good example of longer-term programming.* Recognising the need to build a longer-term culture strategy in the RPHoA, SDC initiated the 'Culture Credit' project between 2016 and 2020, with the aim of identifying and testing potential long-term partners and programme modalities. While the project was a success in many regards, SDC's own analysis of the project states that it did not create synergies between the six interventions it supported and the wider SDC RPHoA programme priorities of Food Security, Governance, Health, and Protection and Migration.[28] This remains a priority focus of the current culture sector evaluation we are undertaking.

*SDC has developed strong advocacy and messaging to promote cultural activities in fragile contexts.* Whether it can legitimately be described as a 'thought leader' in this area remains to be seen from our fieldwork, but the wealth of online material available through the Culture Matters web portal clearly demonstrates a well-conceived, evidence-based policy ambition to be a leader in the field of culture. The platform highlights not only the broad range of cultural programmes supported by SDC, but also the thinking behind them. A 'prezzi' on *Capitalisation* provides a particularly useful resource for policy makers and practitioners who want to increase cultural funding.[29] These core messages are reflected across SDC's many publications on culture, including the *Culture and Development Policy (2016)* and *the Reflection Papers on Culture and Development (2020a).*

*From our experience working in the culture sector, SDC stands apart from other donors in this regard.* Switzerland's historic commitment to neutrality lends credibility to the claim that SDC's programmes

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[27] Ibid, p.10
[28] SDC (2020b), p.4
[29] The prezzi highlights common objections to cultural funding and offers field-level counter narratives from SDC's experience. It also highlights some of the key arguments in favour of cultural programming. https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Culture-Matters/home-sdc/capitalisation

are non-partisan. Indeed, SDC may well be uniquely well positioned to champion cross-cultural dialogue without accusation of bias towards one group or another. Again, this is something we aim to address in our interviews and analysis.

## NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT IN RPHOA

### Summary

Aleph conducted a review of national policy frameworks from Somalia and Puntland, Somaliland, Kenya and Ethiopia in order to identify areas of alignment with SDC's culture sector ambitions in the RPHoA. This is a non-exhaustive exercise. Here we are primarily concerned with identifying broad themes in national-level development plans and culture strategies. Regional cultural strategies – if they exist – are not available online. A review of national policy frameworks helps us to answer a number of important questions that directly inform long-term strategic planning:

i) Do the respective national governments of each state value cultural programming?

ii) What types of programme are they likely to support?

iii) How can SDC ensure its culture programmes strengthen rather than undermine national governments?

iv) Identify possible policy gaps that require support from SDC.

These questions shall be addressed fully in our final analytical report. We present some initial thinking below, to stimulate discussion with SDC.

### Somalia and Puntland

*UNESCO reports in 2013 that the legislative and policy landscape for culture in Somalia is weak.* The report describes weak national and institutional policies on culture that do not reflect the needs, priorities or realities of cultural development in the Somali context.[30]

*On the basis of available online literature, we find no evidence to contradict UNESCO's summary.* Our fieldwork aims to provide a more updated perspective on this diagnosis. There are some indications

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[30] UNESCO (2013), p.21

that positive changes have been made, such as Somalia's recent ratification of the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.[31] Nevertheless, the paucity of available literature published online by the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism makes it difficult to judge whether these political statements have translated into effective policies and programmes. According to UNESCO, the 2012 report remains just as relevant today, having been validated several times by Somali government officials over the last two years[32]. The recommendations contained in this report are therefore still as pressing today as they were seven years ago. This reminds us of the pace of these types of reforms.

*As we note throughout this report, we are hesitant to recommend that SDC engages directly in policy development work with the national government.* While UNESCO's 2013 scoping study for the culture sector identified policy support as a priority intervention area[33], this can be an expensive and time-consuming endeavour, typically involving international meetings, conferences, and international consultants. Moreover, as Mary Harper – a BBC Correspondent for the region, author and long-time observer of Somalia – surmises: 'one of the biggest failures of policy towards Somalia has been the fixation with lengthy and expensive internationally sponsored 'peace' conferences held outside the country.'

*SDC's cultural development approaches are well-aligned with Somalia's wider policy framework, which provides some potential entry points.* Key areas include:

- Alignment between SDC and the *National Development Plan* on the subject of **most vulnerable groups**, and the particular focus on women, youths, rural poor and IDPs. Cultural programmes that benefit these groups would therefore likely chime well with national government counterparts.
- The Development Plan's 'cross-cutting imperatives' also provide a natural link to SDC's priorities. Strengthening **gender equality** and building **household resilience** could be addressed by supporting female and youth entrepreneurs/artisans working in the creative industries, including (domestic) cultural tourism.

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[31] https://en.unesco.org/news/somalia-ratifies-two-major-unesco-cultural-conventions
[32] Key informant interview with UNESCO. UNESCO has held workshops with officials in Somalia to revisit the findings and recommendations of the report.
[33] UNESCO (2013), p.ix

- Within the *National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism*[34] there is a specific focus on **cultural festivals and events**. The strategy states that the Ministry of Information and Culture's Strategic Communications will implement indirect P/CVE activities to counter al-Shabaab narratives. This will include cultural festivals and national competitions for artists and artisans. This could create opportunities for SDC to collaborate with organisations working on P/CVE in the region, leveraging matched resources to achieve greater impact.

- Somalia's *Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018-2020*[35], lists '**strengthening the research capacity of the Somali Academy for Culture and Heritage**', as a priority under its broader programme objective to strengthen and develop national capacity for research and innovation. The Plan provides no further details for what this entails, nor are there further details available online.

*Puntland has a strategic focus on youth programming, which aligns with SDC's goals.* Although there is little policy material available online for Puntland's strategic priorities in the culture sector, the *Revised Development Plan 2017-2019* outlines two objectives under its goal of supporting youth employment:

- Output 1: **Technical vocational trainings** are improved.
- Output 5: **Centre for art and culture** for youth development.

## Somaliland

*Somaliland's policies are aligned with SDC in the areas of youth employment and vocational skills training.* There is also alignment on marginalised and vulnerable groups, whom the Somaliland Government consider priorities. **Youths** are a cross-cutting theme, with a particular focus on promoting **employment generation** and sports activities, and promoting patriotism and a sense of national identity through inter-regional youth activities. The obvious entry point for SDC here is youth and gender programming, particularly for activities that support income generation and those that encourage inter-regional exchange and trade.

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[34] Federal Government of Somalia (2016), p11
[35] Federal Government of Somalia (2018), p.211

*Historically, the Government of Somaliland has recognised the importance of culture for state building.* Somaliland's *Vision 2030*, published in 2011, outlines a clear development trajectory for Somaliland.[36] Culture is identified as one of six priority sectors for building the 'caring' society they envision. The Government views culture as a means to strengthen national cohesion. It considers religious leaders to be the custodians of traditional culture and values, and the means of ensuring national cohesion.

*However, it is unclear whether culture remains a core development priority for the Government of Somaliland.* Certainly, the *National Development Plan II (2017)*, which expands upon the Vision 2030, makes no reference to culture at all. Interviews with stakeholders in Somaliland should provide further clarity.

## Kenya

*Culture is well represented in Kenya's national policy frameworks.* The Kenya Constitution (2010) ratifies the ICOMOS (1998) *Stockholm Declaration*, which espouses the right of everyone to partake freely in the cultural life of the community.[37] It also ratifies the UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.[38]* For a reasonably up to date assessment of Kenya's legal framework for culture, SDC can refer to Deisser and Njunga (2016), which provides a forensic account of national legislation.[39] It also provides a detailed list of all national acts that relate to culture, including *the National Museums and Heritage Act (2006); the Environmental and Co-Ordination Act (1999); the Land Act (2012)* and *the Antiquities and Monuments Act.* Taken together, Kenya's legislative frameworks illustrate that culture is considered an important growth vector in Kenya. Indeed, Kenya has developed a *National Plan for Culture and Heritage*[40], which outlines Kenya's plans for promoting and protecting Kenya's diverse cultural landscape.

*However, Kenya's National Plan for Culture and Heritage has drawn much criticism from external reviews, which call for a number of reforms.* Deisser and Njunga (2016)[41] provide an assessment of Kenya's National Plan for Culture and Heritage, which it describes as outdated, unresponsive and

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[36] Government of Somaliland (2011), pp.10-11
[37] ICOMOS (1998)
[38] UNESCO (2003)
[39] Deisser and Njunga (2016), pp.30-44
[40] Government of the Republic of Kenya (2009)
[41] Deisser and Njunga (2016), p.30

contradictory.[42] A review by DFID on the business environment for the creative industries in Kenya conducted the same year paints an equally disparaging picture, describing a general lack of institutional clarity. Specific examples can be found in the report.[43] In our view, these criticisms are justified, as the strategy is largely descriptive, providing little structure or direction. On the basis of our own experience working on policy reforms in the culture sector, and of evaluating the impact of policy reform work[44], we cautiously advise against any such focus in Kenya. Not only is this often slow and challenging work, it would also detract significantly from the core mandate of supporting cultural programmes for Somali speaking communities.

*Nevertheless, the National Plan for Culture and Heritage is aligned with SDC on a number of areas:*

- One entry point within the National Plan for Culture and Heritage that could be of interest to SDC is the commitment to establish **Community Cultural Centres** in all constituencies and districts and focal points for the promotion of intercultural dialogue and national cohesion.[45] It is unclear whether these centres have been established, whether they are operational or what they actually do. Further research is needed to address this.
- The Plan also states that the Government aims to ensure the promotion of culture through *regional and international exchanges.* No direction is provided, but this does resonate with SDC's own focus on creating a pan-regional strategy.

*DFID's 2016 review of the culture economy identifies a number of interesting potential entry points for SDC.* The review sought to identify specific challenges and opportunities for enterprises working in creative industries. The report highlighted one specific recommendation for the international community: develop systems for enterprise development and entrepreneurship for the creative economy. [46] It suggests a number of steps to achieve this. Though they fall outside SDC's traditional approach to cultural programming, we have seen similar approaches work with a degree of success in other contexts.

- Develop SMEs, MSMEs and start-up business incubation centres and boot camps for the creative economy's private sector in at least the three major cities in Kenya;

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[42] Ibid, p.30
[43] DFID (2013), p.16
[44] Aleph Strategies (2018) and (2019)
[45] Government of the Republic of Kenya (2009), p.7
[46] DFID (2013), p.16

- Develop a curriculum for business skill training for the SMEs, MSMEs and start-ups;
- Initiate mobile mentorship programmes to support the up-coming entrepreneurs in the creative economy.

**No regional policies or strategies can be found for the Somali region of Kenya.**

## Ethiopia

***At a national policy level, the culture sector is generally well represented.*** The Government's *Growth and Transformation Plan II* has a section dedicated to culture and tourism [47]. In particular it notes that the Government's primary focus shall be expanding ***employment opportunities for women and youth***. Specific goals that align closely with SDC include:

- Enhancing 'the development of the cultural industry and market linkages, establishing and developing industrial innovation centres in regional cities, building and establishing theatre and cinema centres at regional and zonal capital towns through forging collaboration between government and the community.' It also includes organizing events and festivals.
- Ensuring 'the use and development of languages, ***fully register (100%) the languages of nations and nationalities***, preparing 5 implementing strategies in relation to the development of language policy and indigenous knowledge, establishing 1 national research institute for language research, translation and indigenous knowledge development…' While not explicit, this does create a mandate for Somali-focussed programming within Ethiopia's borders.

***Looking more specifically at the country's culture strategy, we find further areas of alignment.*** The *Cultural Policy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia* espouses cultural diversity and freedom of cultural expression for all peoples and groups in Ethiopia.[48] Indeed, according to UNESCO, each region in Ethiopia has its own Culture and Tourism Bureau, pursuing decentralised plans.[49] In fact, the Government's *Proclamation No.839/2014* allows regional cultural heritage to be managed by regional 'organs', suggesting a degree of autonomy to implement highly regionalised cultural programming.[50] How this functions in reality remains to be seen from the fieldwork.

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[47] Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2016)
[48] Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2016)
[49] UNESCO (2017): Ethiopia Report: https://en.unesco.org/creativity/governance/periodic-reports/2017/ethiopia
[50] Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2014): *A Proclamation to provide for the classification of cultural heritages into national and regional cultural centres.*

*There are three main ongoing government programmes/projects that align with SDC.* The UNESCO 2005 Convention (Diversity of Cultural Expressions) report for Ethiopia, published in 2017[51], provides a summary of extant cultural policies and programmes in Ethiopia. While the list contains only those policies and programmes that pertain to 'diversity of cultural expression', this is a fairly good synthesis of the range of measures which could be aimed at promoting Somali culture. Looking through the list, there are three specific references to Somali culture:

i)      The Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Day;

ii)      The EU's Promoting Heritage for Ethiopia's Development programme; and

iii)      The Development of Cultural Centres Programme financed by the Ethiopian Government)

**No regional policies or strategies can be found for the Somali region of Ethiopia.**

## Implications for SDC

*From a 'top-line' reading of the national policy literature, there are three main themes that stand out: i) youths, ii) gender and iii) employment.* These areas appear in various forms in all of the national-level policy frameworks for development and culture. Cultural programmes that create income for vulnerable or marginalised groups, and especially young people, are likely to gain good traction with national governments in the region. Whether this entails supporting enterprises to cater to domestic markets or international markets is an open question at this stage. There is certainly demand in foreign markets (particularly Europe, the US and Canada) for traditional national craft as shown by businesses like ISHKAR, which work with vulnerable communities in conflict and post-conflict countries to sell their products overseas.[52] However, a more realistic goal may be to focus on domestic markets – providing goods and services that meet local needs.  Business skills training for women and youths is an obvious example of the type of programming that would support this work. Vocational skills training and the promotion of traditional craft and knowledge could also be considered.

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[51] UNESCO (2017): Ethiopia Report: https://en.unesco.org/creativity/governance/periodic-reports/2017/ethiopia
[52] https://www.ishkar.com

*There is a need for policy and legislative reform / development in each of the RPHoA countries.* As noted above, there is a general need to provide support and capacity building to national (and likely local) policy makers and government staff. Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland in particular require support to develop cultural strategies and operational plans. The danger is that the development of these plans gets outsourced to an international consultant, resulting in well-written, well-meaning but ultimately ineffective cultural strategies that bear no relation to the operational capacity of the duty bearers themselves (an insight gleaned both from our own experience and speaking to stakeholders in the RPHoA). SDC can refer to its own programme in Afghanistan, where efforts to support the government develop a culture strategy have been extremely slow.[53] Developing these strategies and plans further therefore requires working hand in hand with governments and building capacity slowly over time. As noted above, we think this is best undertaken in partnership with UNESCO if SDC wishes to embark on this process. UNESCO is highly active in this space, and has already committed considerable time and resource in developing legislative and policy reform plans, for which it seeks funding to implement.

*SDC will need to tread carefully and sensitively if it wishes to engage in a regional cultural programme* – particularly one that celebrates a shared Somali culture, as this could run against the grain of national culture agenda in Kenya and Ethiopia. Cultural policies in Kenya and Ethiopia are preoccupied with strengthening *national* rather than *regional* identity. Though often marginalised, Somali speaking communities are considered part of the national fabric in each country. Cultural policies in both Kenya and Ethiopia speak of the importance of cohesion. For example, Article 1.5 of the Kenya *National Policy of Culture and Heritage* states: *Culture diversity acknowledges the fact that each culture is distinct and has its own value to the community embracing it as well as to other communities interacting with it. Making cultural diversity a recognizable fact and working towards preserving it is a bold statement of the Government that the richness of our diversity does not negate national cohesion.*[54]

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[53]https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/activities-projects/projekte-fokus/Project-database.filterResults.html/content/dezaprojects/SDC/en/2015/7F09250/phase2?oldPagePath=/content/deza/en/home/aktivitaeten_projekte/projekte-fokus/projektdatenbank.html
[54] Office of the Vice-President Ministry of State for National Heritage and Culture (2009), p.6

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

**Embassy of Switzerland in Nairobi**
**International Cooperation Division / Swiss Agency for**
**Development and Cooperation SDC**

**Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft**
**Confédération suisse**
**Confederazione Svizzera**
**Confederaziun svizra**

## Management Response
## to the Culture Sector Evaluation for the Horn of Africa

### 1) Introduction

The goal of the evaluation of the Horn of Africa (HoA) culture sector, was to determine key entry points for SDC to establish a long-term, 12 year, culture programme in the HoA region.

Specifically, the evaluation was to identify culture institutions and partners, ongoing donor initiatives in the culture field and areas of engagement for the preservation of tangible and/or intangible cultural heritage. It was also to identify how culture initiatives can be used to promote social cohesion, inclusion and reconciliation.

The evaluation was meant to examine culture linkages to the other SDC strategic domains (Food Security, Health, Governance and Migration/Protection), and how it can be used to provide an increased understanding of regional / cross-border issues.

Overall, the evaluation was to generate learning and recommendations for SDC, on how best to approach and engage in the culture sector in the HoA, as well as identify Switzerland's niche in the culture sector, in the region.

For the evaluation, an inclusive (Nairobi and Addis Ababa office) and transparent interview process was undertaken in August 2020, which led to the selection of Aleph Strategies Limited as the winning candidate. The Aleph Strategies field team for this evaluation included a lead consultant, Robert Kluijver, and a local consultant. The project was overseen by Jonathan Rider, Director of Aleph Strategies Ltd.

The Terms of Reference for the Culture Sector Evaluation were established in July 2020; the evaluation was initially planned for between September and October 2020. However, a second phase of the evaluation in Ethiopia was commissioned after submission of the initial report by Aleph Strategies, in November 2020. This resulted in additional field work in Ethiopia and the evaluation having been concluded in March 2021.

### 2) Appreciation of Report and Evaluation Process

Aleph Strategies conducted an exclusively qualitative exercise, relying on insights, ideas and information gathered through extensive key informant interviews and desk-based research.

Initially, the focus of the evaluation was on all Somali-inhabited areas of the Horn of Africa: Somalia (incl.Somaliland), North Eastern Kenya and South Eastern Ethiopia. However, after review of the initial final report, the Ethiopia office felt that Aleph should consider possible entry points in Addis Ababa, to link the Somali culture scene with the national one. This was to allow SDC to potentially support projects aiming at linking Ethiopia's Somali region cultural scene, with national stakeholders, in order to avoid further isolation and segregation of the Region and its population within Ethiopia. This led to Aleph conducting a second phase of the evaluation in Ethiopia for two weeks, between February and March 2021.

The approved final report reflected the above, and was well presented and received.

### 3) Preliminary considerations on the ability to implement measures

The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected the overall working conditions. Physical meetings, learning events and field visits could not take place. Due to travel restriction, some interviews had to take place virtually. Also, the lead evaluator had to undergo a 14 day quarantine, while in Ethiopia, for the second part of the evaluation.

The implementation of projects in the culture sector have also been affected, with public spaces only partially opened or entirely shut down, and gatherings restricted. We note that it may take a while before things normalize due to the pandemic.

SDC has allocated approx. CHF 500,000 per year, to support the implementation of a regional culture programme in all three countries of the Regional Programme Horn of Africa (RPHoA). This reflects 1% of the funds available from South Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, for the Horn of Africa Programme. This amount is limiting. To achieve greater impact, SDC will have to focus on key recommendations to move forward with, so as to not spread itself too thin.

Also, overall investments in the culture sector in the Horn of Africa region are minimal, with priority issues taking precedence. Therefore, finding like-minded donors to co-fund projects will be important to ensure greater impact.

### 4) Recommendations

## Pillar 1: Policy and Advocacy

| Recommendation 1.1 |
|---|
| **Promote the role of culture in achieving social and economic development outcomes:** SDC should positon itself as a key donor and entry point for culture programming in the region. This can be done through: 1. Promoting idea exchange workshops with other culture partners linked to priority topics; 2. Publishing a truncated version of the final report of the HoA Culture assessment for knowledge sharing with individuals and organizations in the culture sector; 3. Exploring opportunities for scaling cultural initiatives through collaboration with non-cultural development programmes implemented by others; 4. engaging in bilateral discussion with other like-minded donors for potential collaborations. |

| Management Response | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Fully agree** | **Partially agree** | Disagree |

1. Idea exchange workshops and topics can only be considered once we are clear on the objectives of the programme and how to implement.

2. Publishing a truncated version of the final report is necessary and is currently being worked on.

3. Opportunities for scaling cultural initiatives through collaboration with non-culture programmes implemented by others, can only be considered once we are clear on the objectives of the programme.

4. We agree that engaging bilateral donors should be done, and will be looked into once we clarify the objectives of the programme, including possibilities to co-fund projects.

| Measures | Responsibility | Deadline |
|---|---|---|
| Publish and distribute a truncated version of the HoA Culture sector assessment for knowledge sharing. | SCO NBO + Aleph Strategies | June 2021 |
| Engage in bilateral discussions with like-minded donors, which will potentially lead to co-funding of projects. | Regional culture team | Continuous |

| Recommendation 1.2 |
|---|
| **Ensure the regional messaging and communication content continually reiterates linkages between culture and wider socio-economic development outcomes.** Culture programming can be packaged in a way to encourage participation from other donors and the government. SDC's programme could contain outcomes such as social cohesion, economic inclusion for women and youth, and civil society, which are topics that are common among government and donor stakeholders. |

| Management Response | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Fully agree** | Partially agree | Disagree |

We agree with the recommendation.
The culture programme will aim to strengthen social cohesion and socio-economic development, therefore our regional messaging and communication will align with this. This will also encourage participation from partners, especially for co-funding.

We can begin by looking at linkages within the four RPHoA domains. However, advocacy will only come in once we are clear on objectives.

| Measures | Responsibility | Deadline |
|---|---|---|
| Look into ongoing policy and advocacy work within the four RPHoA domains, for how they can align with culture. Develop a narrative in the Entry Proposal that highlights linkages between the foreseen cultural activities and social cohesion and inclusion. | Regional culture team | August 2021 |

| Recommendation 1.3 |
|---|
| **Engage with national government counterparts in a continual effort to ensure culture is considered a priority for regional development.** Linking culture to wider national development priorities can generate dialogue with other ministries. However, SDC shouldn't engage directly in policy reform activities or government capacity building initiatives. |

| Management Response | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Fully agree** | Partially agree | Disagree |

We agree to engaging the national governments continuously in culture, and finding linkages to wider national development outcomes.
This can be linked to recommendation 1.2 where messaging and coordination with other partners can also be used to engage the national government.
We agree that policy reform and government capacity building initiatives are not approaches to consider.

| Measures | Responsibility | Deadline |
|---|---|---|
| Engage national governments to ensure culture is considered a priority for regional development by linking it to wider national development priorities. This can be done best while already participating in discussions related to other development topics. | Regional culture team | Continuous; mainly from Phase II of Credit Proposal. |

## Pillar 2: Building linkages between culture sector actors

| Recommendation 2.1 |
|---|
| SDC's activities should encourage collaboration and coordination between organizations wherever possible. This can be done by investing in partnership ventures, possibly by a |

consortium of partners, who organize recurring culture events. If successful, to potentially franchise to other locations within the region.

| Management Response | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Fully agree** | Partially agree | Disagree |

We agree, however, the initiatives should already be existing and not spearheaded by SDC, to prevent a donor-driven association.

Instead of (non-sustainable) financial support to associations, a Market-Systems Development (MSD) approach focusing on improving the business model of the cultural associations / ventures can be done and will be more beneficial.

An MSD approach to strengthen cultural association and networks would be a full project by itself and given the funding level, limits engagement in other pillars.

Alternatively, SDC might work in the context of other pillars with a series of cultural or academic individuals or organizations. Linking them and encourage collaboration within the regional project might also foster new partnerships.

| Measures | Responsibility | Deadline |
|---|---|---|
| Identify and seek out collaborations with other partners in our projects and/or invest in already existing joint initiatives, with like-minded partners. | Regional culture team | Continuous |
| Clarify, if (a) the culture market in the focus region of the RPHoA is sufficiently large for a Market-Systems Development (MSD) approach, focusing on improving the business model of the cultural associations / ventures and/or a training on MSD for culture actors to be successful; and (b) if SDC would be well placed to engage in such an endeavour. This can be done together with Recommendation 5.1 which proposes a thorough assessment of the culture creatives industries. Therefore, formulate ToR's for the above, for a short (2-3 week) assessment funded through the small actions credit. | Culture officer + RHoC | July 2021 |

| Recommendation 2.2 | | |
|---|---|---|
| SDC to consider investing in physical infrastructure. | | |
| **Management Response** | | |
| **Fully agree** | Partially agree | Disagree |

Investing in physical infrastructure is not a priority for SDC at the moment, and funding is limited for this, especially if SDC is to do it alone. However, if with other donors, it can be explored. In the meantime, funds can be better utilized in other areas, with higher potential to fulfil our objectives.

## Pillar 3: Preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage

| Recommendation 3.1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| SDC should fund mapping of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Cultural practitioners have shown interest in a joint effort to map culture heritage before it's lost. This is a concern in the whole Somali region of the HoA. | | |
| **Management Response** | | |
| **Fully agree** | Partially agree | Disagree |

Overall, this pillar was the most concrete recommendation since it's the most conducive for a regional approach. Preservation of cultural heritage is a regional concern, and a point of cohesion to unite and connect the (Somali regions of the) three countries.

In regards to mapping of tangible and intangible heritage, digital archiving, creating learning/education content and using online platforms for knowledge sharing can be included. It can also be used to influence at policy level, for national authorities to do preservation of their heritage.

This can be an outcome of Phase I of the CP.

| Measures | Responsibility | Deadline |
|---|---|---|
| Commission a mapping exercise of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the countries of the HoA. | Culture officer | Phase I of Credit Proposal (CP) |
| Based on results of the mapping exercise, come up with concrete interventions and identify the partner(s) to implement. | Regional culture team | Second part of phase I to Phase III of CP |

| Recommendation 3.2 |
|---|
| SDC should support the mapping and promotion of the Somali language. There are concerns within the region that the Somali language is being neglected through the loss of regional dialects. Therefore protection and preservation of the Somali language should be considered. |
| Management Response |

| Fully agree | Partially agree | Disagree |
|---|---|---|

We agree that we should support the protection and preservation of Somali language. This intervention can also strengthen a regional approach and be a point of cohesion, since it's a common issue among the countries of the RPHoA. There are great potential partnership opportunities, for example, Jigjiga University, who host the Somali language institute with a functioning research department. Also, Djibouti has taken a leading role in the preservation of Somali language, and launched a museum for learning and preserving Somali language. They plan to do a similar structure in Mogadishu. We will find out more information when the time comes, including potential collaborations.

We see language as part of the intangible heritage and therefore that this recommendation complements Recommendation 3.1 as well as Recommendation 2.1. in regards to encouraging collaboration and coordination among partners.

| Measures | Responsibility | Deadline |
|---|---|---|
| Mapping exercise of the Somali language in the region and identifying concrete interventions and partnerships for protection and conservation of the language. This can be linked to the mapping exercise of tangible and intangible heritage, in Recommendation 3.1. | Regional culture team | Phase I of the CP. |

| Recommendation 3.3 |
|---|
| SDC should support Puntland's Ministry of Information, Heritage, Culture and Tourism in its first heritage conservation and development efforts. This can be through support to the fort in Eyl, which has a museum and is a potential location for tourism development. |
| Management Response |

| Fully agree | Partially agree | Disagree |
|---|---|---|

This recommendation is at the moment too specific. If SDC were to be engaged in a regional programme mainly based on recommendation 3.1, such specific heritage sites

to be supported might emerge from there. Furthermore, it is not a priority since conservation of the fort in Eyl will primarily involve infrastructure support, which might be too costly. This will of course depend on how much additional funding SDC would be able to mobilize from other donors.

| Recommendation 3.4 |
|---|
| SDC should support outreach and educational activities to build awareness of Somalia's rich built and archaeological cultural heritage. This can focus on youth in towns in Somaliland and the Somali Region of Ethiopia, with participation from universities in Addis Ababa and Nairobi. |

| Management Response | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Fully agree** | Partially agree | Disagree |

It is an interesting point to consider especially for universities in the region to collaborate. We see synergies with recommendation 3.1 and 3.2; findings from the mapping of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including Somali language, should be used to develop awareness in youth, e.g. through educational material for schools. This might be relevant particularly from phase II onwards.

## Pillar 4: Promotion of contemporary and traditional culture

| Recommendation 4.1 |
|---|
| SDC should allocate grants for small-scale grass-roots cultural initiatives administered by an implementing partner or external fiduciary actor. |

| Management Response | | |
|---|---|---|
| Fully agree | **Partially agree** | Disagree |

It is usually difficult for grass-root cultural initiatives to receive funding. To a certain extent, the small actions credit can continue to support cultural initiatives with smaller credits. The question would be if the development of a microcredit fund (for small scale support of 5'000-10'000 USD) handled and supervised by an implementing agent / fund manager would complement the small actions credit.

We are however aware that these initiatives may not be sustainable, but necessary, especially for young artists who would not getting funding otherwise, and to ensure initiatives are community-led. They could also support the plurality of cultural expression.

| Measures | Responsibility | Deadline |
|---|---|---|
| Explore possibilities of allocating small-scale grants, by first clarifying the potential overhead costs of a fund manager and thereby the cost-benefit analysis. If seen as feasible, clarify the funding mechanism and funding criteria e.g. geographic scope, thematic scope, size of grants, etc. To then determine whether to allocate funds for this in the overall programme. | Culture officer | TBC before drafting the EP. (Q3 2021) |

| Recommendation 4.2 |
|---|
| SDC should facilitate a roving 'Got Talent' show in North Eastern Kenya. |

| Management Response | | |
|---|---|---|
| Fully agree | Partially agree | **Disagree** |

We disagree with this recommendation. It is not seen as a priority for us and less in line with SDC's scope. It could further have reputational risks.

| Recommendation 4.3 | | |
|---|---|---|
| SDC should support small-scale local initiatives to use culture for peacebuilding purposes. | | |
| **Management Response** | | |
| **Fully agree** | Partially agree | Disagree |
| We agree, however this recommendation will not be looked into as a stand-alone, but together with Recommendation 1.2, 1.3, 3.1 and 4.1 above, since there are linkages. | | |

| Recommendation 4.4 | | |
|---|---|---|
| SDC should support cultural awareness raising efforts for political transition by building up on Puntland's youth to effectuate political transition by supporting cultural awareness raising efforts throughout Puntland districts. | | |
| **Management Response** | | |
| Fully agree | **Partially agree** | Disagree |
| We agree. This can be beneficial with different upcoming elections in the HoA countries. Specifications of how to approach it, can be determined once we are clear on objectives. | | |

| Recommendation 4.5 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Support to Ethiopian Somali Youth Entertainment and Mobilization. This is through support to The Culture and Unity youth group, to travel through the Somali region of Ethiopia providing cultural entertainment to people. | | |
| **Management Response** | | |
| Fully agree | Partially agree | **Disagree** |
| We disagree with this recommendation. It is not a priority for us and our limited funding can be better utilized in other areas, to fulfil our objectives. | | |

| Recommendation 4.6 | | |
|---|---|---|
| SDC can help increase exposure of non-Somalis in Ethiopia and Kenya, to Somali culture, in an effort to build a platform for Somali culture at national level, and to avoid marginalization. | | |
| **Management Response** | | |
| **Fully agree** | Partially agree | Disagree |
| We agree with the recommendation. It can be linked to Recommendation 3.1, by making sure the mapping and support to tangible and intangible cultural heritage is presented at national level to help increase exposure. Such initiatives can be complemented by the small actions credit. To be better defined once we are clear on objectives. | | |

## Inclusive Economic Growth

| Recommendation 5.1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| During the early stages of the culture programme, SDC should undertake a thorough assessment of the culture creatives industries, to identify specific barriers to economic growth and opportunities for job creation for women and youth. | | |
| **Management Response** | | |
| Fully agree | **Partially agree** | Disagree |
| This can be done, but linked to Recommendation 2.1, together with the Somali handicraft production mentioned under 'Migration/protection' (below). But we will first need to do a | | |

| thorough market study in order to avoid support to handicraft production that is unsustainable and donor-driven. | | |
|---|---|---|
| For the Ethiopia region, a market study is less interesting. | | |
| **Measures** | **Responsibility** | **Deadline** |
| Refer to measures under Recommendation 2.1. | | |

## Creating links with SDC's wider strategic priorities in the RPHoA

| **Recommendation 6.1** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Migration/protection: SDC should partially fund a consortium of partners, including handicraft shops and vocational institutions, to improve the quality and contemporary relevance of Somali handicrafts production, with a focus on Somali women refugees. | | |
| **Management Response** | | |
| Fully agree | Partially agree | Disagree |
| We decided that we would internally look into synergies with domains and how to bring them out. Migration/protection projects that would have had linkages may close in Summer 2022 and Kakuma camp has very few Somalis (Skills for Life), or not linked to creative industries (IFCs KKCF). | | |

| **Recommendation 6.2** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Health: Provides a potential entry point for culture programming for example through support to a women only sports facility which encourages healthy active living. | | |
| **Management Response** | | |
| Fully agree | Partially agree | Disagree |
| Sports is too far from our focus. We decided that we would internally look into synergies with other domains and how to bring them out. | | |

Nairobi and Addis Ababa, (25.06.2021)


_____          _____

(Thomas Oertle)                           (Davide Vignati)

Regional Head of Cooperation              Head of Cooperation

Embassy of Switzerland, Nairobi           Embassy of Switzerland, Addis Ababa